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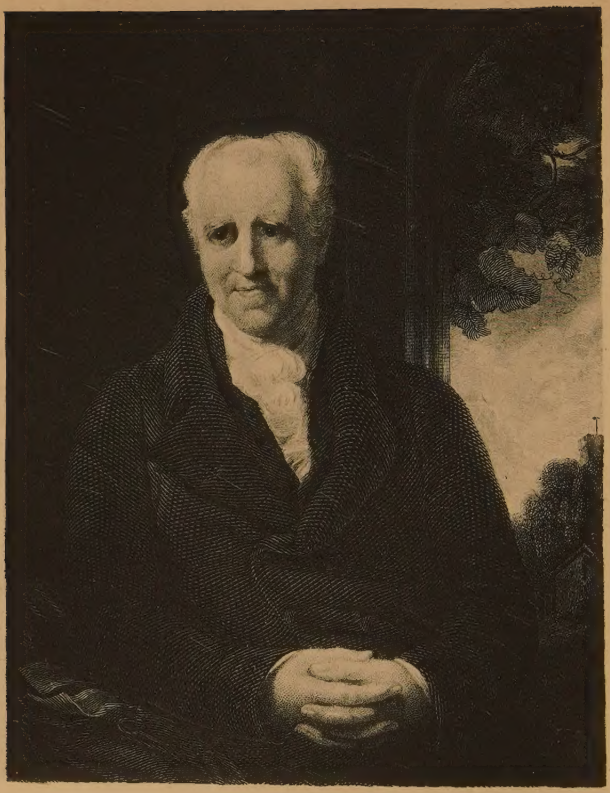
CRABBE'S POEMS



REV.D GEORGE CRABBE.

THE POEMS

OF

GEORGE CRABBE

A SELECTION

ARRANGED AND EDITED BY

BERNARD HOLLAND

LONDON
EDWARD ARNOLD
37 BEDFORD STREET
1899

PREFACE

CRABBE'S poetry, like that of Wordsworth, is large in bulk and very varying in quality. In the complete edition of 1834 it occupies seven volumes. Matthew Arnold did good work for the Wordsworthian host in bringing within compass all that was best in the Lake Poet. I hope that in a like way the present volume may be useful to the band of lovers of Crabbe; at present, it is true, rather a scanty band. May it add to their ranks some who have not had the opportunity, or the time, or the patience, to sift out for themselves the fine poetic ore in Crabbe's copious output.

Crabbe's personal experience plays so large a part in his poetry that it is well to remind readers of the outline of his life. It is taken from the very agreeable memoir written by his son, and forming the first of the eight volumes of the 1834 edition of the works. George Crabbe was born at Aldborough (also spelt Aldeburgh), an old town on the Suffolk coast, on Christmas Eve, 1754. He came of a stock of East Anglian yeomen and seamen, but his father filled the official post of collector of salt-duties, or "Salt-Master," at Aldborough. Here, in Suffolk, Crabbe passed his life till he was twenty-five, as a child, and schoolboy, and then as a surgeon's apprentice, varied by occupation

as a warehouse clerk. His heart, however, was divided between literature and study of botany, and so forth, and not given to his regular work. By way of medicine there seemed to him to be no prospect of acquiring a speedy competence. This was the more vexatious since he became conditionally engaged to the charming but prudent niece of Mr. Tovell of Parham Hall, a prosperous Suffolk yeoman.

In 1779 George Crabbe resolved on a desperate plunge, and fled to London, equipped with five pounds and a bundle of poetic MS. At first all looked black, booksellers refused his work; and, in spite of addresses both in verse and prose to Lord Thurlow, Lord North, Lord Shelburne, and others, no patron could be found. Just when the poet was reduced to the utmost distress, and was in danger of arrest for debt, he was saved by Edmund Burke. Mr. Burke was struck by a sad letter addressed to him by the unknown youth, gave him an interview, was pleased with his manner and varied knowledge, and with some poetry which was shown to him, encouraged the despairer and treated him with the utmost kindness. He invited the young poet to Beaconsfield, introduced him to Mr. Fox, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Johnson, and all the best society of the day; arranged for the publication of his first poems, and assisted him, in spite of technical difficulties due to his non-university education, to gain admittance to holy orders. Crabbe returned to Aldborough as curate, and soon afterwards Mr. Burke obtained for him the post of Chaplain to the Duke of Rutland, at Belvoir Castle. In 1783, year of

publication of "The Village," Crabbe married Miss Elmy, and in 1787, upon the death of his patron the Duke, he became rector of Muston in the Vale of Belvoir, and of Allingham in Lincolnshire. Never has a bold venture been better justified by the event than Crabbe's flight to London. The poet with his wife and children lived at Muston, with frequent expeditions into Suffolk, until the year 1792. At this time the yeoman uncle of Mrs. Crabbe died; she became a co-heiress of the house and land at Parham, and Mr. Crabbe, leaving a curate at Muston, migrated to Suffolk, living first at Parham, then at Glenham Hall, lastly in a house at Rendham. He assisted in clerical duties in the surrounding parishes, read, wrote, botanised, mineralised, and entomologised. In 1805 he returned to take charge of his parish of Muston. In 1813 his wife died, and in the same year Mr. Crabbe accepted the living of Trowbridge, in Wiltshire. Here he lived till his death, at the age of 78, in the year 1832. His life at Trowbridge was broken by periodical visits to London, where he was welcomed by the best literary society, and in 1822, by the one great journey of his life, to Scotland, at the invitation of Sir Walter Scott, his cordial admirer.

Crabbe's works were published in the following order:—

"The Library," . . .	published	1781,	when author was	27
"The Village," . . .	,,	1783,	,, ,,	29
"The Newspaper," &c.,	,,	1785,	,, ,,	31
"The Parish Register," &c.,	,,	1807,	,, ,,	53
"The Borough," . . .	,,	1810,	,, ,,	56
"Tales,"	,,	1812,	,, ,,	58
"Tales of the Hall," .	,,	1819,	,, ,,	65
"Posthumous Tales" .	,,	1834,	after death of author	

This poetic career was thus intersected by a gap of twenty-three years between the publication of the "Newspaper," and that of the "Parish Register." It is not uncommon that poets should somewhat languish during the middle part of life, and revive in their later years. Wordsworth offers an instance of this, and so, I think, does Tennyson. But there are few poets who, like Crabbe, have kept both the best and largest part of their wine until they have passed their fiftieth year. Out of the seven volumes of the Complete Works, five and a half, and those much the best, belong to the post-fifty period. The "Tales of the Hall," filling two volumes of the 1834 edition, were written in 1817 and 1818 when the poet was nearly sixty-five. They are not of such sustained merit, I think, as the previous "Tales" published in 1812, and Crabbe's artistic defects appear more clearly in them, yet they are full of most excellent passages, and please by a kind of autumnal mellowness.

About the year 1820 the popularity of Crabbe's poetry was, perhaps, at its height. Mr. Murray was able to give to him, in 1819, the sum of £3000 for the "Tales of the Hall," together with the copyright of all the previous works.

Lord Byron admired Crabbe's poetry, and called him "Nature's sternest painter, yet the best." * In 1816 Byron wrote, "I consider Crabbe and Coleridge the first of these times in point of power and genius." Crabbe's poems are said to have been more often in Sir Walter Scott's hands, in the later part of his life, than

* "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers."

any other books, except Shakespeare, and "during the few intervals in those sad days after his return to Abbotsford, in 1832, when he was sufficiently himself to ask his family to read aloud to him, the only books he ever called for were his Bible and his Crabbe."*

Wordsworth, a man both sincere and chary of praise, thus wrote to the poet's son and biographer in 1834: "Any testimony to the merit of your revered father's Works would, I feel, be superfluous, if not impertinent. They will last from their combined merits as poetry and truth, full as long as anything that has been expressed in verse since they first made their appearance"—a period which, be it noted, includes almost all Wordsworth's own work. Crabbe was favourite reading with Cardinal Newman, a keen student of human character and motives. He said that, after fifty years, he read "Richard's Story of his Boyhood" with the same delight as on its first appearance, and that "A work which can please in youth and age seems to fulfil (in logical language) the accidental definition of a classic."† Edward Fitzgerald relates that the late Laureate shared in this appreciation. "Almost the last time I met him he was quoting from memory that fine passage in 'Delay has Danger,' where the late autumn landscape seems to borrow from the conscience-stricken lover who gazes on it the gloom which it reflects upon him;"‡ and, "in the course of

* Note to Crabbe's Poems, vol. ii. p. 184; and see "Lockhart's Life of Scott," vol. x. p. 210.

† "Idea of a University Edition," 1875, p. 150.

‡ See page 288 of this selection.

> Shows a clear mind and clean, and whoso needs
> This love, but seldom in the world succeeds;
> Still has the love of order found a place
> With all that's low, degrading, mean, and base."

"Within the poet's house," he adds, "there was a kind of scientific confusion of books, papers, collections of flowers, minerals, insects," &c.

A defect in Crabbe's poetry cognate to absence of good order is its diffuseness. In almost every poem there are long divagations which help not the story forward at all. It is excellent poetry to read aloud, provided that the reader is sufficiently experienced to know where to skip; otherwise he will bore his audience. Thus the poetry of Crabbe is a garden which needs weeding and pruning, with some rearranging. It would certainly be impossible, without rather large abbreviations in many of the poems, to make, within reasonable compass, a good selection covering a wide range of his work. I have been encouraged to venture upon such condensation, by the example of Edward Fitzgerald, that faithful Crabbite in the time of greatest disrelish for Crabbe's poetry. In a letter of 1877, Fitzgerald says that he did some years before get some one "to ask Murray if he would publish a selection from all Crabbe's poems as has been done of Wordsworth and others. But Murray would not meddle." Fitzgerald in 1879 printed privately a selection from the "Tales of the Hall," gave copies to his friends, and in 1882, published a small number of copies through Mr.

Quaritch.* His method is to relate in his own prose part of Crabbe's stories, thus abridging, as he says, "tracts of bad verse," and when he resumes the original, to leave out lines here and there, sometimes two, sometimes ten, sometimes more, when Crabbe's divagations break the flow of narrative. Fitzgerald also sometimes, but rarely, changes the order of the verse, so as to make it more effective. He alters none of the wording, save here and there a very slight change consequent upon some omission or rearrangement. In the present selection I have not adopted Fitzgerald's plan of prose abridgments. But, where I cover the same ground, I have usually followed his condensations and rearrangements of the original verse, though by no means invariably. Where my selection extends to ground not covered by Fitzgerald—who restricted himself to the "Tales of the Hall"—I have acted, but with great caution, on the same lines. It is, perhaps, rather a presumption on my part, but it seemed to me that something of the kind was absolutely necessary if a truly representative selection was to be made. I hope that the present volume will induce some to read the original poems in their completeness, the more so because the selection hardly does justice to Crabbe's lighter or more comic vein. I think, however, that his peculiar genius shows itself chiefly in his more austere or pathetic stories, and, in selecting,

* "The Crabbe is the same I sent you some years ago . . . and now I have tacked on to it a little Introduction, and sent forty copies to lie on Quaritch's counter; for I do not suppose they will get further. And no great harm done if they stay where they are." (Letter to Mr. Norton, March 7, 1883.)

therefore, I have made the balance incline in favour of these.

Jeffrey, reviewing Crabbe in the *Edinburgh Review*, once spoke of him as our Rembrandt in poetry, He meant, I suppose, that Crabbe, like Rembrandt, excels in touching the depths of things," while depicting minutely the most commonplace people in the most everyday surroundings and episodes. But his purely light comedies are also excellent reading. One of the most perfect of them, "The Frank Courtship," has been included in this volume.

To resume, then, it has been my endeavour to put together such a selection as may lead those who are not acquainted with Crabbe to find pleasure in his poetry; and to those who know him well may be of service as a single volume containing, I hope, that which they like best. If, in some degree, the book serves these purposes I shall be well satisfied.

BERNARD HOLLAND.

1899.

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CRABBE'S POEMS

SMUGGLERS AND LABOURERS

LO! where the heath, with withering brake grown o'er,
Lends the light turf that warms the neighbouring poor;
From thence a length of burning sand appears,
Where the thin harvest waves its wither'd ears;
Rank weeds, that every art and care defy,
Reign o'er the land, and rob the blighted rye:
There thistles stretch their prickly arms afar,
And to the ragged infant threaten war;
There poppies nodding, mock the hope of toil;
There the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil;
Hardy and high, above the slender sheaf,
The slimy mallow waves her silky leaf;
O'er the young shoot the charlock throws a shade,
And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade;
With mingled tints the rocky coasts abound,
And a sad splendour vainly shines around.

Where are the swains, who, daily labour done,
With rural games play'd down the setting sun?

Where now are these?—Beneath yon cliff they stand,
To show the freighted pinnace where to land;
To load the ready steed with guilty haste,
To fly in terror o'er the pathless waste,
Or, when detected, in their straggling course,
To foil their foes by cunning or by force;
Or, yielding part (which equal knaves demand),
To gain a lawless passport through the land.

Here, wand'ring long, amid these frowning fields,
I sought the simple life that Nature yields;
Rapine and Wrong and Fear usurp'd her place,
And a bold, artful, surly, savage race
Who, only skill'd to take the finny tribe,
The yearly dinner, or septennial bribe,
Wait on the shore, and, as the waves run high,
On the tost vessel bend their eager eye,
Which to their coast directs its vent'rous way;
Theirs, or the ocean's, miserable prey.

As on their neighbouring beach yon swallows stand,
And wait for favouring winds to leave the land;
While still for flight the ready wing is spread:
So waited I the favouring hour, and fled;
Fled from these shores where guilt and famine reign,
And cried, Ah! hapless they who still remain;
Who still remain to hear the ocean roar,
Whose greedy waves devour the lessening shore;
Till some fierce tide with more imperious sway,
Sweeps the low hut and all it holds away.

But these are scenes where Nature's niggard hand
Gave a spare portion to the famish'd land;

Hers is the fault, if here mankind complain
Of fruitless toil and labour spent in vain;
But yet in other scenes more fair in view,
When Plenty smiles—alas! she smiles for few—
And those who taste not, yet behold her store,
Are as the slaves that dig the golden ore—
The wealth around them makes them doubly poor.

Or will you deem them amply paid in health,
Labour's fair child, that languishes with wealth?
Go then! and see them rising with the sun,
Through a long course of daily toil to run;
See them beneath the dog-star's raging heat,
When the knees tremble and the temples beat;
Behold them, leaning on their scythes, look o'er
The labour past, and toils to come explore;
See them alternate suns and showers engage,
And hoard up aches and anguish for their age;
Through fens and marshy moors their steps pursue,
When their warm pores imbibe the evening dew;
Then own that labour may as fatal be
To these thy slaves, as thine excess to thee.

Amid this tribe too oft a manly pride
Strives in strong toil the fainting heart to hide;
There may you see the youth of slender frame
Contend with weakness, weariness, and shame;
Yet, urged along, and proudly loth to yield,
He strives to join his fellows of the field.

Yet grant them health, 'tis not for us to tell,
Though the head droops not, that the heart is well;

Or will you praise that homely, healthy fare,
Plenteous and plain, that happy peasants share!
Oh! trifle not with wants you cannot feel,
Nor mock the misery of a stinted meal;
Homely, not wholesome, plain, not plenteous, such
As you who praise would never deign to touch.

Ye gentle souls, who dream of rural ease,
Whom the smooth stream and smoother sonnet please;
Go! if the peaceful cot your praises share,
Go look within, and ask if peace be there;
If peace be his—that drooping weary sire,
Or theirs, that offspring round their feeble fire;
Or hers, that matron pale, whose trembling hand
Turns on the wretched hearth th' expiring brand!

Nor yet can Time itself obtain for these
Life's latest comforts, due respect and ease;
For yonder see that hoary swain, whose age
Can with no cares except its own engage;
Who, propt on that rude staff, looks up to see
The bare arms broken from the withering tree,
On which, a boy, he climb'd the loftiest bough,
Then his first joy, but his sad emblem now.
He once was chief in all the rustic trade;
His steady hand the straightest furrow made;
Full many a prize he won, and still is proud
To find the triumphs of his youth allow'd;
A transient pleasure sparkles in his eyes,
He hears and smiles, then thinks again and sighs:
For now he journeys to his grave in pain;
The rich disdain him; nay, the poor disdain.

Oft may you see him, when he tends the sheep,
His winter charge, beneath the hillock weep;
Oft hear him murmur to the winds that blow
O'er his white locks and bury them in snow,
When, roused by rage and muttering in the morn,
He mends the broken hedge with icy thorn:—
"Why do I live, when I desire to be
"At once from life and life's long labour free?
"Like leaves in spring, the young are blown away,
"Without the sorrows of a slow decay;
"I, like yon wither'd leaf, remain behind,
"Nipt by the frost, and shivering in the wind."
Thus, groan the old, till, by disease oppress'd,
They taste a final woe, and then they rest.

Theirs is yon House that holds the parish poor,*
Whose walls of mud scarce bear the broken door;
There, where the putrid vapours, flagging, play,
And the dull wheel hums doleful through the day;—
There children dwell who know no parents' care;
Parents, who know no children's love, dwell there!
Heart-broken matrons on their joyless bed,
Forsaken wives, and mothers never wed;
Dejected widows with unheeded tears,
And crippled age with more than childhood fears;
The lame, the blind, and, far the happiest they!
The moping idiot, and the madman gay.

Here too the sick their final doom receive,
Here brought, amid the scenes of grief, to grieve,

* Note A.—The Poorhouse.

Where the loud groans from some sad chamber flow,
Mixt with the clamours of the crowd below;
Here, sorrowing, they each kindred sorrow scan,
And the cold charities of man to man:
Whose laws indeed for ruin'd age provide,
And strong compulsion plucks the scrap from pride;
But still that scrap is bought with many a sigh,
And pride embitters what it can't deny.

Say, ye, opprest by some fantastic woes,
Some jarring nerve that baffles your repose;
Who press the downy couch, while slaves advance
With timid eye to read the distant glance;
Who with sad prayers the weary doctor tease,
To name the nameless ever-new disease;
Who with mock patience dire complaints endure,
Which real pain and that alone can cure;
How would ye bear in real pain to lie,
Despised, neglected, left alone to die?
How would ye bear to draw your latest breath,
Where all that's wretched paves the way for death?

Such is that room which one rude beam divides,
And naked rafters form the sloping sides;
Where the vile bands that bind the thatch are seen,
And lath and mud are all that lie between;
Save one dull pane, that, coarsely patch'd, gives way
To the rude tempest, yet excludes the day:
Here, on a matted flock, with dust o'erspread,
The drooping wretch reclines his languid head;
For him no hand the cordial cup applies,
Or wipes the tear that stagnates in his eyes;

No friends with soft discourse his pain beguile,
Or promise hope, till sickness wears a smile.
Anon, a figure enters, quaintly neat,
All pride and business, bustle and conceit;
With looks unalter'd by these scenes of woe,
With speed that, entering, speaks his haste to go.
Paid by the parish for attendance here,
He wears contempt upon his sapient sneer;
In haste he seeks the bed where Misery lies,
Impatience mark'd in his averted eyes;
And, some habitual queries hurried o'er,
Without reply, he rushes on the door:
His drooping patient, long inured to pain,
And long unheeded, knows remonstrance vain.
Fain would he ask the parish priest to prove
His title certain to the joys above:
For this he sends the murmuring nurse, who calls
The holy stranger to these dismal walls:
And doth not he, the pious man, appear,
He, "passing rich with forty pounds a year?"
Ah! no; a shepherd of a different stock,
And far unlike him, feeds this little flock:
A jovial youth, who thinks his Sunday's task
As much as God or man can fairly ask;
The rest he gives to loves and labours light,
To fields the morning, and to feasts the night;
None better skill'd the noisy pack to guide,
To urge their chase, to cheer them or to chide;
A sportsman keen, he shoots through half the day,
And, skill'd at whist, devotes the night to play:
Then, while such honours bloom around his head,
Shall he sit sadly by the sick man's bed,

To raise the hope he feels not, or with zeal
To combat fears that e'en the pious feel?
Up yonder hill, behold how sadly slow
The bier moves winding from the vale below:
There lie the happy dead, from trouble free,
And the glad parish pays the frugal fee:
No more, O Death! thy victim starts to hear
Churchwarden stern, or kingly overseer;
No more the farmer claims his humble bow,
Thou art his lord, the best of tyrants thou!
Now to the church behold the mourners come,
Sedately torpid and devoutly dumb;
The village children now their games suspend,
To see the bier that bears their ancient friend:
For he was one in all their idle sport,
And like a monarch ruled their little court;
The pliant bow he form'd, the flying ball,
The bat, the wicket, were his labours all;
Him now they follow to his grave, and stand,
Silent and sad, and gazing, hand in hand.*

* Crabbe was inclined to protest against the sentimental unrealism as to rural life of which Rousseau was the prophet and Goldsmith to some extent an interpreter in England.

PHŒBE DAWSON *

TWO summers since I saw at Lammas Fair,
The sweetest flower that ever blossom'd there,
When *Phœbe Dawson* gaily cross'd the Green,
In haste to see and happy to be seen:
Her air, her manners, all who saw admired;
Courteous though coy, and gentle though retired;
The joy of youth and health her eyes display'd,
And ease of heart her every look convey'd;
A native skill her simple robes express'd,
As with untutor'd elegance she dress'd;
The lads around admired so fair a sight,
And Phœbe felt, and felt she gave, delight.
Admirers soon of every age she gain'd,
Her beauty won them and her worth retain'd;
Envy itself could no contempt display,
They wish'd her well, whom yet they wish'd away.
Correct in thought, she judged a servant's place
Preserved a rustic beauty from disgrace;
But yet on Sunday-eve, in freedom's hour,
With secret joy she felt that beauty's power,
When some proud bliss upon the heart would steal,
That, poor or rich, a beauty still must feel.—

* Sir Walter Scott, a day or two before his death, listened with pleasure to this poem, which he had known by heart. Many years earlier, read from a MS., it had pleased the dying Fox.

At length the youth ordain'd to move her breast,
Before the swains with bolder spirit press'd;
With looks less timid made his passion known,
And pleased by manners most unlike her own;
Loud though in love, and confident though young;
Fierce in his air, and voluble of tongue;
By trade a tailor, though, in scorn of trade,
He served the 'Squire, and brush'd the coat he made.
Yet now, would Phœbe her consent afford,
Her slave alone, again he'd mount the board;
With her should years of growing love be spent,
And growing wealth:—she sigh'd and look'd consent.

Now, through the lane, up hill, and 'cross the green,
(Seen by but few, and blushing to be seen—
Dejected, thoughtful, anxious, and afraid,)
Led by the lover, walk'd the silent maid,
Slow through the meadows roved they, many a mile,
Toy'd by each bank, and trifled at each stile;
Where, as he painted every blissful view,
And highly colour'd what he strongly drew,
The pensive damsel, prone to tender fears,
Dimm'd the false prospect with prophetic tears.—
Thus pass'd th' allotted hours, till lingering late,
The lover loiter'd at the master's gate;
There he pronounced adieu! and yet would stay,
Till chidden—soothed—entreated—forced away;
He would of coldness, though indulged, complain,
And oft retire, and oft return again;
When, if his teasing vex'd her gentle mind,
The grief assum'd, compell'd her to be kind!

For he would proof of plighted kindness crave,
That she resented first and then forgave,
And to his grief and penance yielded more
Than his presumption had required before.—
Ah! fly temptation, youth; refrain! refrain!
Each yielding maid and each presuming swain!

Lo! now with red rent cloak and bonnet black,
And torn green gown loose hanging at her back,
One who an infant in her arms sustains,
And seems in patience striving with her pains;
Pinch'd are her looks, as one who pines for bread,
Whose cares are growing and whose hopes are fled;
Pale her parch'd lips, her heavy eyes sunk low,
And tears unnoticed from their channels flow;
Serene her manner, till some sudden pain
Frets the meek soul, and then she's calm again;—
Her broken pitcher to the pool she takes,
And every step with cautious terror makes;
For not alone that infant in her arms,
But nearer cause, her anxious soul alarms.
With water burthen'd, then she picks her way,
Slowly and cautious, in the clinging clay;
Till, in mid-green, she trusts a place unsound,
And deeply plunges in th' adhesive ground;
Thence, but with pain, her slender foot she takes,
While hope the mind as strength the frame forsakes:
For when so full the cup of sorrow grows,
Add but a drop, it instantly o'erflows.
And now her path but not her peace she gains,
Safe from her task, but shivering with her pains;

Her home she reaches, open leaves the door,
And placing first her infant on the floor,
She bares her bosom to the wind, and sits,
And sobbing struggles with the rising fits:
In vain, they come, she feels the inflating grief,
That shuts the swelling bosom from relief;
That speaks in feeble cries a soul distress'd,
Or the sad laugh that cannot be repress'd.
The neighbour-matron leaves her wheel and flies
With all the aid her poverty supplies;
Unfee'd, the calls of Nature she obeys,
Not led by profit, not allured by praise;
And waiting long, till these contentions cease,
She speaks of comfort, and departs in peace.
Friend of distress! the mourner feels thy aid,
She cannot pay thee, but thou wilt be paid.

But who this child of weakness, want, and care?
'Tis *Phœbe Dawson*, pride of Lammas Fair:
Who took her lover for his sparkling eyes,
Expressions warm, and love-inspiring lies:
Compassion first assail'd her gentle heart,
For all his suffering, all his bosom's smart:
"And then his prayers! they would a savage move,
"And win the coldest of the sex to love:"—
But ah! too soon his looks success declared,
Too late her loss the marriage-rite repair'd;
The faithless flatterer then his vows forgot,
A captious tyrant or a noisy sot:
If present, railing, till he saw her pain'd;
If absent, spending what their labours gain'd;
Till that fair form in want and sickness pined,
And hope and comfort fled that gentle mind.

BELVOIR CASTLE.

CONTRAST BETWEEN THE SEAPORT AND INLAND SCENES

DESCRIBE the Borough"—though our idle tribe
May love description, can we so describe,
That you shall fairly streets and buildings trace,
And all that gives distinction to a place?
This cannot be; yet, moved by your request,
A part I paint—let Fancy form the rest.

Cities and towns, the various haunts of men,
Require the pencil; they defy the pen:
Could he, who sang so well the Grecian fleet,
So well have sung of alley, lane, or street?
Can measured lines these various buildings show,
The Town-Hall Turning, or the Prospect Row?
Can I the seats of wealth and want explore,
And lengthen out my lays from door to door?

Then let thy Fancy aid me—I repair
From this tall mansion of our last-year's Mayor,
Till we the outskirts of the Borough reach,
And these half-buried buildings next the beach;
Where hang at open doors the net and cork,
While squalid sea-dames mend the meshy work;
Till comes the hour, when fishing through the tide,
The weary husband throws his freight aside;

A living mass, which now demands the wife,
Th' alternate labours of their humble life.

Can scenes like these withdraw thee from thy wood,
Thy upland forest or thy valley's flood?
Seek then thy garden's shrubby bound, and look,
As it steals by, upon the bordering brook;
That winding streamlet, limpid, lingering, slow,
Where the reeds whisper when the zephyrs blow;
Where in the midst, upon her throne of green,
Sits the large Lily as the water's queen;
And makes the current, forced awhile to stay,
Murmur and bubble as it shoots away;
Draw then the strongest contrast to that stream,
And our broad river will before thee seem.
With ceaseless motion comes and goes the tide,
Flowing, it fills the channel vast and wide;
Then back to sea, with strong majestic sweep
It rolls, in ebb yet terrible and deep;
Here Samphire-banks and Salt-wort bound the flood,
There stakes and sea-weeds withering on the mud;
And higher up, a ridge of all things base,
Which some strong tide has roll'd upon the place.
Thy gentle river boasts its pigmy boat,
Urged on by pains, half grounded, half afloat;
While at her stern an angler takes his stand,
And marks the fish he purposes to land;
From that clear space, where, in the cheerful ray
Of the warm sun, the scaly people play.
Far other craft our prouder river shows,
Hoys, pinks and sloops; brigs, brigantines and snows:

Nor angler we on our wide stream descry,
But one poor dredger where his oysters lie:
He, cold and wet, and driving with the tide,
Beats his weak arms against his tarry side,
Then drains the remnant of diluted gin,
To aid the warmth that languishes within;
Renewing oft his poor attempts to beat
His tingling fingers into gathering heat.
He shall again be seen when evening comes,
And social parties crowd their favourite rooms:
Where on the table pipes and papers lie,
The steaming bowl or foaming tankard by;
'Tis then, with all these comforts spread around,
They hear the painful dredger's welcome sound;
And few themselves the savoury boon deny,
The food that feeds, the living luxury.

Yon is our Quay! those smaller hoys from town,
Its various ware, for country-use, bring down;
Those laden waggons, in return, impart
The country-produce to the city mart;
Hark! to the clamour in that miry road,
Bounded and narrow'd by yon vessel's load;
The lumbering wealth she empties round the place,
Package, and parcel, hogshead, chest, and case:
While the loud seaman and the angry hind,
Mingling in business, bellow to the wind.
Near these a crew amphibious, in the docks,
Rear, for the sea, those castles on the stocks:
See! the long keel, which soon the waves must hide;
See! the strong ribs which form the roomy side;

Bolts yielding slowly to the sturdiest stroke,
And planks which curve and crackle in the smoke.
Around the whole rise cloudy wreaths, and far
Bear the warm pungence of o'er-boiling tar.
Dabbling on shore half-naked sea-boys crowd,
Swim round a ship, or swing upon the shroud;
Or in a boat purloin'd, with paddles play,
And grow familiar with the watery way:
Young though they be, they feel whose sons they are,
They know what British seamen do and dare;
Proud of that fame, they raise and they enjoy
The rustic wonder of the village-boy.
Before you bid these busy scenes adieu,
Behold the wealth that lies in public view,
Those far-extended heaps of coal and coke,
Where fresh-fill'd lime-kilns breathe their stifling smoke.
This shall pass off, and you behold, instead,
The night-fire gleaming on its chalky bed;
When from the Light-house brighter beams will rise,
To show the shipman where the shallow lies.

Thy walks are ever pleasant; every scene
Is rich in beauty, lively, or serene——
Rich—is that varied view with woods around,
Seen from the seat, within the shrubb'ry bound;
Where shines the distant lake, and where appear
From ruins bolting, unmolested deer;
Lively—the village-green, the inn, the place,
Where the good widow schools her infant-race.
Shops, whence are heard the hammer and the saw,
And village-pleasures unreproved by law;

Then how serene! when in your favourite room,
Gales from your jasmines soothe the evening gloom;
When from your upland paddock you look down,
And just perceive the smoke which hides the town;
When weary peasants at the close of day
Walk to their cots, and part upon the way;
When cattle slowly cross the shallow brook,
And shepherds pen their folds, and rest upon their crook.

We prune our hedges, prime our slender trees,
And nothing looks untutor'd and at ease,
On the wide heath, or in the flow'ry vale,
We scent the vapours of the sea-born gale;
Broad-beaten paths lead on from stile to stile,
And sewers from streets, the road-side banks defile;
Our guarded fields a sense of danger show,
Where garden-crops with corn and clover grow;
Fences are form'd of wreck and placed around,
(With tenters tipp'd) a strong repulsive bound;
Wide and deep ditches by the gardens run,
And there in ambush lie the trap and gun;
Or yon broad board, which guards each tempting prize,
"Like a tall bully, lifts its head and lies."

There stands a cottage with an open door,
Its garden undefended blooms before:
Her wheel is still, and overturn'd her stool,
While the lone Widow seeks the neighb'ring pool:
This gives us hope, all views of town to shun—
No! here are tokens of the Sailor-son;
That old blue jacket, and that shirt of check,
And silken kerchief for the seaman's neck;

Sea-spoils and shells from many a distant shore,
And furry robe from frozen Labrador.

Our busy streets and sylvan-walks between,
Fen, marshes, bog and heath all intervene;
Here pits of crag, with spongy, plashy base,
To some enrich th' uncultivated space:
For there are blossoms rare, and curious rush,
The gale's* rich balm, and sun-dew's crimson blush
Whose velvet leaf with radiant beauty dress'd,
Forms a gay pillow for the plover's breast.

Not distant far, a house commodious made,
(Lonely yet public stands) for Sunday-trade;
Thither, for this day free, gay parties go,
Their tea-house walk, their tippling rendezvous;
There humble couples sit in corner-bowers,
Or gaily ramble for th' allotted hours;
Sailors and lasses from the town attend,
The servant-lover, the apprentice-friend;
With all the idle social tribes who seek
And find their humble pleasures once a week.

Turn to the watery world!—but who to thee
(A wonder yet unview'd) shall paint—the Sea?
Various and vast, sublime in all its forms,
When lull'd by zephyrs, or when roused by storms,
Its colours changing, when from clouds and sun
Shades after shades upon the surface run;
Embrown'd and horrid now, and now serene,
In limpid blue, and evanescent green;

* Another name for the candleberry.

And oft the foggy banks on ocean lie,
Lift the fair sail, and cheat th' experienced eye.

Be it the Summer-noon: a sandy space
The ebbing tide has left upon its place;
Then just the hot and stony beach above,
Light twinkling streams in bright confusion move;
Then the broad bosom of the ocean keeps
An equal motion; swelling as it sleeps,
Then slowly sinking; curling to the strand,
Faint, lazy waves o'ercreep the ridgy sand,
Or tap the tarry boat with gentle blow,
And back return in silence, smooth and slow.
Ships in the calm seem anchor'd; for they glide
On the still sea, urged solely by the tide:
Art thou not present, this calm scene before,
Where all beside is pebbly length of shore,
And far as eye can reach, it can discern no more?

Yet sometimes comes a ruffling cloud to make
The quiet surface of the ocean shake;
As an awaken'd giant with a frown
Might show his wrath, and then to sleep sink down.
View now the Winter-storm! above, one cloud,
Black and unbroken, all the skies o'ershroud;
Th' unwieldy porpoise through the day before
Had roll'd in view of boding men on shore;
And sometimes hid and sometimes show'd his form,
Dark as the cloud, and furious as the storm.

All where the eye delights, yet dreads to roam,
The breaking billows cast the flying foam

Upon the billows rising—all the deep
Is restless change; the waves so swell'd and steep,
Breaking and sinking, and the sunken swells,
Nor one, one moment, in its station dwells:
But nearer land you may the billows trace,
As if contending in their watery chase;
May watch the mightiest till the shoal they reach,
Then break and hurry to their utmost stretch;
Curl'd as they come, they strike with furious force,
And then re-flowing, take their grating course,
Raking the rounded flints, which ages past
Roll'd by their rage, and shall to ages last.

Far off the Petrel in the troubled way
Swims with her brood, or flutters in the spray;
She rises often, often drops again,
And sports at ease on the tempestuous main.
High o'er the restless deep, above the reach
Of gunner's hope, vast flights of Wild-ducks stretch;
Far as the eye can glance on either side,
In a broad space and level line they glide;
All in their wedge-like figures from the north,
Day after day, flight after flight, go forth.
In-shore their passage tribes of Sea-gulls urge,
And drop for prey within the sweeping surge;
Oft in the rough opposing blast they fly
Far back, then turn, and all their force apply,
While to the storm they give their weak complaining cry;
Or clap the sleek white pinion to the breast,
And in the restless ocean dip for rest.

Darkness begins to reign; the louder wind
Appals the weak and awes the firmer mind;
But frights not him, whom evening and the spray
In part conceal—yon Prowler on his way:
Lo! he has something seen; he runs apace,
As if he fear'd companion in the chase;
He sees his prize, and now he turns again,
Slowly and sorrowing—"Was your search in vain?"
Gruffly he answers, "'Tis a sorry sight!
"A seaman's body: there'll be more to-night!"

Hark! to those sounds! they're from distress at sea:
How quick they come! What terrors may there be!
Yes, 'tis a driven vessel: I discern
Lights, signs of terror, gleaming from the stern;
Others behold them too, and from the town
In various parties seamen hurry down;
Their wives pursue, and damsels urged by dread,
Lest men so dear be into danger led;
Their head the gown has hooded, and their call
In this sad night is piercing like the squall.
See one poor girl, all terror and alarm,
Has fondly seized upon her lover's arm;
"Thou shalt not venture;" and he answers "No!
"I will not"—still she cries, "Thou shalt not go."
No need of this; not here the stoutest boat
Can through such breakers, o'er such billows float,
Yet may they view these lights upon the beach,
Which yield them hope, whom help can never reach.

From parted clouds the moon her radiance throws
On the wild waves, and all the danger shows;

But shows them beaming in her shining vest,
Terrific splendour! gloom in glory dress'd!
This for a moment, and then clouds again
Hide every beam, and fear and darkness reign.

Such are our Winter-views: but night comes on—
Now business sleeps, and daily cares are gone;
Now parties form, and some their friends assist
To waste the idle hours at sober whist;
The tavern's pleasure or the concert's charm
Unnumber'd moments of their sting disarm;
Play-bills and open doors a crowd invite,
To pass off one dread portion of the night;
And show and song and luxury combined,
Lift off from man this burthen of mankind.

Others advent'rous walk abroad and meet
Returning parties pacing through the street;
When various voices, in the dying day,
Hum in our walks, and greet us in our way;
When tavern-lights flit on from room to room,
And guide the tippling sailor staggering home:
There as we pass, the jingling bells betray
How business rises with the closing day:
Now walking silent, by the river's side,
The ear perceives the rippling of the tide;
Or measured cadence of the lads who tow
Some enter'd hoy, to fix her in her row;
Or hollow sound, which from the parish-bell
To some departed spirit bids farewell!

THE CHURCH

WHAT is a Church?"—Let Truth and Reason speak,
They would reply, "The faithful, pure, and meek;
"From Christian folds, the one selected race,
"Of all professions, and in every place."

"What is a Church?"—"A flock," our Vicar cries,
"Whom bishops govern and whom priests advise;
"Wherein are various states and due degrees,
"The Bench for honour, and the Stall for ease;
"That ease be mine, which, after all his cares,
"The pious, peaceful prebendary shares."

"What is a Church?"—Our honest Sexton tells,
"'Tis a tall building, with a tower and bells;
"Where priest and clerk with joint exertion strive
"To keep the ardour of their flock alive;
"That, by his periods eloquent and grave;
"This, by responses, and a well-set stave:
"These for the living; but when life be fled,
"I toll myself the requiem for the dead."

'Tis to this Church I call thee, and that place
Where slept our fathers when they'd run their race:

We too shall rest, and then our children keep
Their road in life, and then, forgotten, sleep;
Meanwhile the building slowly falls away,
And, like the builders, will in time decay.

The old Foundation—but it is not clear
When it was laid—you care not for the year;
On this, as parts decayed by time and storms,
Arose these various disproportion'd forms;
Yet Gothic all—the learn'd who visit us
(And our small wonders) have decided thus:—
"Yon noble Gothic arch," "That Gothic door;"
So have they said; of proof you'll need no more.

Here large plain columns rise in solemn style,
You'd love the gloom they make in either aisle;
When the sun's rays, enfeebled as they pass
(And shorn of splendour) through the storied glass,
Faintly display the figures on the floor,
Which pleased distinctly in their place before.
But ere you enter, yon bold Tower survey,
Tall and entire, and venerably grey,
For time has soften'd what was harsh when new,
And now the stains are all of sober hue;
The living stains which Nature's hand alone,
Profuse of life, pours forth upon the stone:
For ever growing; where the common eye
Can but the bare and rocky bed descry;
There Science loves to trace her tribes minute,
The juiceless foliage, and the tasteless fruit;
There she perceives them round the surface creep,
And while they meet, their due distinction keep;

Mix'd but not blended; each its name retains,
And these are Nature's ever-during stains.

And wouldst thou, Artist! with thy tints and brush,
Form shades like these? Pretender, where thy blush?
In three short hours shall thy presuming hand
Th' effect of three slow centuries command?
Thou may'st thy various greens and greys contrive,
They are not Lichens, nor like aught alive;—
But yet proceed, and when thy tints are lost,
Fled in the shower, or crumbled by the frost;
When all thy work is done away as clean
As if thou never spread'st thy grey and green;
Then may'st thou see how Nature's work is done,
How slowly true she lays her colours on;
When her least speck upon the hardest flint
Has mark and form and is a living tint;
And so embodied with the rock, that few
Can the small germ upon the substance view.

Seeds, to our eye invisible, will find
On the rude rock the bed that fits their kind;
There, in the rugged soil, they safely dwell,
Till showers and snows the subtle atoms swell,
And spread th' enduring foliage;—then we trace
The freckled flower upon the flinty base;
These all increase, till in unnoticed years
The stony tower as grey with age appears;
With coats of vegetation, thinly spread,
Coat above coat, the living on the dead:
These then dissolve to dust, and make a way
For bolder foliage, nursed by their decay:

The long-enduring Ferns in time will all
Die and depose their dust upon the wall;
Where the wing'd seed may rest, till many a flower
Show Flora's triumph o'er the falling tower.

But ours yet stands, and has its Bells renown'd
For size magnificent and solemn sound;
Each has its motto: some contrived to tell,
In monkish rhyme, the uses of a bell.

Enter'd the Church—we to a tomb proceed,
Whose names and titles few attempt to read;
Old English letters, and those half pick'd out,
Leave us, unskilful readers, much in doubt;
Our sons shall see its more degraded state;
The tomb of grandeur hastens to its fate;
That marble arch, our sexton's favourite show,
With all those ruff'd and painted pairs below;
The noble Lady and the Lord who rest
Supine, as courtly dame and warrior dress'd;
All are departed from their state sublime,
Mangled and wounded in their war with Time
Colleagued with mischief; here a leg is fled,
And lo! the Baron with but half a head;
Midway is cleft the arch; the very base
Is batter'd round and shifted from its place.

With few such stately proofs of grief or pride
By wealth erected, is our Church supplied;
But we have mural tablets, every size,
That woe could wish, or vanity devise.

—See! here lamented wives, and every wife
The pride and comfort of her husband's life;
Here, to her spouse, with every virtue graced,
His mournful widow has a trophy placed;
And here 'tis doubtful if the duteous son,
Or the good father, be in praise outdone.

This may be Nature: when our friends we lose,
Our alter'd feelings alter too our views;
What in their tempers teased us or distress'd,
Is, with our anger and the dead, at rest;
And much we grieve, no longer trial made,
For that impatience which we then display'd;
Now to their love and worth of every kind
A soft compunction turns th' afflicted mind;
Virtues neglected then, adored become,
And graces slighted, blossom on the tomb.

'Tis well; but let not love nor grief believe
That we assent (who neither loved nor grieve)
To all that praise which on the tomb is read,
To all that passion dictates for the dead;
But more indignant, we the tomb deride,
Whose bold inscription flattery sells to pride.

Read of this Burgess—on the stone appear
How worthy he! how virtuous! and how dear!
What wailing was there when his spirit fled,
How mourn'd his lady for her lord when dead,
And tears abundant through the town were shed;
See! he was liberal, kind, religious, wise,
And free from all disgrace and all disguise;
His sterling worth, which words cannot express,
Lives with his friends, their pride and their distress.

All this of Jacob Holmes? for his the name;
He thus kind, liberal, just, religious?—Shame!
What is the truth? Old Jacob married thrice;
He dealt in coals, and av'rice was his vice;
He ruled the Borough when his year came on,
And some forget, and some are glad he's gone.

Yet, here will Love its last attentions pay,
And place memorials on these beds of clay.
Large level stones lie flat upon the grave,
And half a century's sun and tempest brave;
But many an honest tear and heartfelt sigh
Have follow'd those who now unnoticed lie;
Of these what numbers rest on every side!
Without one token left by grief or pride;
Their graves soon levell'd to the earth, and then
Will other hillocks rise o'er other men;
Daily the dead on the decay'd are thrust,
And generations follow, "dust to dust."

Yes! there are real Mourners—I have seen
A fair, sad Girl, mild, suffering, and serene;
Attention (through the day) her duties claim'd,
And to be useful as resign'd she aim'd:
Neatly she dress'd, nor vainly seem'd t' expect
Pity for grief, or pardon for neglect;
But when her wearied parents sunk to sleep,
She sought her place to meditate and weep:
Then to her mind was all the past display'd,
That faithful Memory brings to Sorrow's aid:
For then she thought on one regretted Youth,
Her tender trust, and his unquestion'd truth;

In ev'ry place she wander'd, where they'd been,
And sadly sacred held the parting scene;
Where last for sea he took his leave—that place
With double interest would she nightly trace;
For long the courtship was, and he would say,
Each time he sail'd,—"This once, and then the day:"
Yet prudence tarried, but when last he went,
He drew from pitying love a full consent.

Happy he sail'd, and great the care she took,
That he should softly sleep, and smartly look;
White was his better linen, and his check
Was made more trim than any on the deck;
And every comfort men at sea can know
Was hers to buy, to make, and to bestow:
For he to Greenland sail'd, and much she told
How he should guard against the climate's cold;
Yet saw not danger; dangers he'd withstood,
Nor could she trace the fever in his blood:
His messmates smiled at flushings in his cheek,
And he too smiled, but seldom would he speak;
Hope was awaken'd, as for home he sail'd,
But quickly sank, and never more prevail'd.

He call'd his friend, and prefaced with a sigh
A lover's message—"Thomas, I must die:
"Would I could see my Sally, and could rest
"My throbbing temples on her faithful breast,
"And gazing go!—if not, this trifle take,
"And say, till death I wore it for her sake;
"Yes! I must die—blow on, sweet breeze, blow on!
"Give me one look, before my life be gone,

"Oh! give me that, and let me not despair,
"One last fond look—and now repeat the prayer."

He had his wish, had more; I will not paint
The Lovers' meeting: she beheld him faint,—
With tender fears, she took a nearer view,
Her terrors doubling as her hopes withdrew;
He tried to smile, and, half succeeding, said,
"Yes! I must die;" and hope for ever fled.
Still long she nursed him: tender thoughts meantime
Were interchanged, and hopes and views sublime.
To her he came to die, and every day
She took some portion of the dread away;
With him she pray'd, to him his Bible read,
Soothed the faint heart, and held the aching head:
She came with smiles the hour of pain to cheer;
Apart she sigh'd; alone, she shed the tear.

One day he lighter seem'd, and they forgot
The care, the dread, the anguish of their lot;
They spoke with cheerfulness, and seem'd to think,
Yet said not so—"Perhaps he will not sink:"
A sudden brightness in his look appear'd,
A sudden vigour in his voice was heard;—
Lively he seem'd, and spoke of all he knew,
The friendly many, and the favourite few;
Nor one that day did he to mind recall
But she has treasured, and she loves them all;
When in her way she meets them, they appear
Peculiar people—death has made them dear.

He named his Friend, but then his hand she press'd,
And fondly whisper'd, "Thou must go to rest;"
"I go," he said; but as he spoke, she found
His hand more cold, and fluttering was the sound!
Then gazed affrighten'd; but she caught a last,
A dying look of love,—and all was past!

She placed a decent stone his grave above,
Neatly engraved—an offering of her love;
Here will she come, and on the grave will sit,
Folding her arms, in long abstracted fit;
But if observer pass, will take her round,
And careless seem, for she would not be found;
Then go again, and thus her hour employ,
While visions please her, and while woes destroy.

Forbear, sweet Maid! nor be by fancy led
To hold mysterious converse with the dead;
For sure at length thy thoughts, thy spirits' pain,
In this sad conflict will disturb thy brain;
All have their tasks and trials; thine are hard,
But short the time, and glorious the reward;
Thy patient spirit to thy duties give,
Regard the dead, but to the living live.

THE VICAR

WHERE ends our chancel in a vaulted space,
Sleep the departed Vicars of the place;
Of most, all mention, memory, thought are past—
But take a slight memorial of the last.

To what famed college we our Vicar owe,
To what fair county, let historians show:
Few now remember when the mild young man,
Ruddy and fair, his Sunday-task began;
Few live to speak of that soft soothing look
He cast around, as he prepared his book;
It was a kind of supplicating smile,
But nothing hopeless of applause the while;
And when he finish'd, his corrected pride
Felt the desert, and yet the praise denied.
Thus he his race began, and to the end
His constant care was, no man to offend;
No haughty virtues stirr'd his peaceful mind;
Nor urged the Priest to leave the Flock behind;
He was his Master's Soldier, but not one
To lead an army of his Martyrs on:
Fear was his ruling passion; yet was Love,
Of timid kind, once known his heart to move;
It led his patient spirit where it paid
Its languid offerings to a listening Maid:

She, with her widow'd Mother, heard him speak,
And sought awhile to find what he would seek:
Smiling he came, he smiled when he withdrew,
And paid the same attention to the two;
Meeting and parting without joy or pain,
He seem'd to come that he might go again.
The wondering girl, no prude, but something nice,
At length was chill'd by his unmelting ice;
She found her tortoise held such sluggish pace,
That she must turn and meet him in the chase:
This not approving, she withdrew till one
Came who appear'd with livelier hope to run;
Who sought a readier way the heart to move,
Than by faint dalliance of unfixing love.

Accuse me not that I approving paint
Impatient Hope or Love without restraint;
Or think the Passions, a tumultuous throng,
Strong as they are, ungovernably strong:
But is the laurel to the soldier due,
Who cautious comes not into danger's view?
What worth has Virtue by Desire untried,
When Nature's self enlists on duty's side?
The married dame in vain assail'd the truth
And guarded bosom of the Hebrew youth;
But with the daughter of the Priest of On
The love was lawful, and the guard was gone;
But Joseph's fame had lessen'd in our view.
Had he, refusing, fled the maiden too.

Yet our good priest to Joseph's praise aspired,
As once rejecting what his heart desired;

"I am escaped," he said, when none pursued;
When none attack'd him, "I am unsubdued;"
"Oh pleasing pangs of love!" he sang again,
Cold to the joy, and stranger to the pain.
Ev'n in his age would he address the young,
"I too have felt these fires, and they are strong;"
But from the time he left his favourite maid,
To ancient females his devoirs were paid;
And still they miss him after Morning-prayer;
Nor yet successor fills the Vicar's chair,
Where kindred spirits in his praise agree,
A happy few, as mild and cool as he;
The easy followers in the female train,
Led without love, and captives without chain.

But let applause be dealt in all we may,
Our Priest was cheerful, and in season gay;
His frequent visits seldom fail'd to please;
Easy himself, he sought his neighbour's ease:
To a small garden with delight he came,
And gave successive flowers a summer's fame;
These he presented with a grace his own
To his fair friends, and made their beauties known,
Not without moral compliment; how they
"Like flowers were sweet, and must like flowers
decay."
Simple he was, and loved the simple truth,
Yet had some useful cunning from his youth;
A cunning never to dishonour lent,
And rather for defence than conquest meant;
'Twas fear of power, with some desire to rise,
But not enough to make him enemies;

He ever aim'd to please; and to offend
Was ever cautious; for he sought a friend.
Fiddling and fishing were his arts: at times
He alter'd sermons, and he aim'd at rhymes;
And his fair friends, not yet intent on cards,
Oft he amused with riddles and charades.

Mild were his doctrines, and not one discourse
But gain'd in softness what it lost in force:
Kind his opinions; he would not receive
An ill report, nor evil act believe;
"If true, 'twas wrong; but blemish great or small
"Have all mankind; yea, sinners are we all."

If ever fretful thought disturb'd his breast,
If aught of gloom that cheerful mind oppress'd,
It sprang from innovation; it was then
He spake of mischief made by restless men;
Not by new doctrines: never in his life
Would he attend to controversial strife;
For Sects he cared not; "They are not of us,
"Nor need we, brethren, their concerns discuss;
"But 'tis the change, the schism at home I feel;
"Ills few perceive, and none have skill to heal:
"Not at the altar our young brethren read
"(Facing their flock) the decalogue and creed;
"But at their duty, in their desks they stand,
"With naked surplice, lacking hood and band:
"Churches are now of holy song bereft,
"And half our ancient customs changed or left;
"Few sprigs of ivy are at Christmas seen,
"Nor crimson berry tips the holly's green;

"Mistaken choirs refuse the solemn strain
"Of ancient Sternhold, which from ours amain
"Comes flying forth from aisle to aisle about,
"Sweet links of harmony and long drawn out."
These were to him essentials; all things new
He deem'd superfluous, useless, or untrue;
To all beside indifferent, easy, cold,
Here the fire kindled, and the woe was told.
Habit with him was all the test of truth,
"It must be right: I've done it from my youth."
Questions he answer'd in as brief a way,
"It must be wrong—it was of yesterday."

Though mild benevolence our Priest possess'd,
'Twas but by wishes or by words express'd,
Circles in water, as they wider flow,
The less conspicuous in their progress grow,
And when at last they touch upon the shore,
Distinction ceases, and they're view'd no more.
His love, like that last circle, all embraced,
But with effect that never could be traced.

Now rests our Vicar. They who knew him best,
Proclaim his life t' have been entirely rest;
Free from all evils which disturb his mind,
Whom studies vex and controversies blind.

The rich approved,—of them in awe he stood;
The poor admired,—they all believed him good;
The old and serious of his habits spoke;
The frank and youthful loved his pleasant joke;

Mothers approved a safe contented guest,
And daughters one who back'd each small request:
In him his flock found nothing to condemn;
Him sectaries liked,—he never troubled them;
No trifles fail'd his yielding mind to please,
And all his passions sunk in early ease;
Nor one so old has left this world of sin,
More like the being that he enter'd in.

THE CURATE

HE once had hope—Hope, ardent, lively, light;
His feelings pleasant, and his prospects bright:
Eager of fame, he read, he thought, he wrote,
Weigh'd the Greek page, and added note on note;
At morn, at evening, at his work was he,
And dream'd what his Euripides would be.

Then care began:—he loved, he woo'd, he wed;
Hope cheer'd him still, and Hymen bless'd his bed—
A curate's bed! then came the woeful years;
The husband's terrors, and the father's tears;
A wife grown feeble, mourning, pining, vex'd
With wants and woes—by daily cares perplex'd;
No more a help, a smiling, soothing aid,
But boding, drooping, sickly, and afraid.

A kind physician, and without a fee,
Gave his opinion—"Send her to the sea."
"Alas!" the good man answer'd, "can I send
"A friendless woman? Can I find a friend?
"No; I must with her, in her need, repair
"To that new place; the poor lie everywhere;—
"Some priest will pay me for my pious pains:"—
He said, he came, and here he yet remains.

Behold his dwelling! this poor hut he hires,
Where he from view, though not from want, retires;

Where four fair daughters, and five sorrowing sons,
Partake his sufferings, and dismiss his duns;
All join their efforts, and in patience learn
To want the comforts they aspire to earn;
For the sick mother something they'd obtain,
To soothe her grief and mitigate her pain;
For the sad father something they'd procure,
To ease the burden they themselves endure.
Virtues like these at once delight and press
On the fond father with a proud distress;
On all around he looks with care and love,
Grieved to behold, but happy to approve.

Then from his care, his love, his grief he steals,
And by himself an Author's pleasure feels:
Each line detains him; he omits not one,
And all the sorrows of his state are gone.—
Alas! even then, in that delicious hour,
He feels his fortune, and laments its power.
Some Tradesman's bill his wandering eyes engage,
Some scrawl for payment thrust 'twixt page and page;
Some bold, loud rapping at his humble door,
Some surly message he has heard before,
Awake, alarm, and tell him he is poor.

An angry Dealer, vulgar, rich, and proud,
Thinks of his bill, and, passing, raps aloud;
The elder daughter meekly makes him way—
"I want my money, and I cannot stay:
"My mill is stopp'd; what, Miss! I cannot grind;
"Go tell your father he must raise the wind!"

Still trembling, troubled, the dejected maid
Says, "Sir! my father!—" and then stops afraid:
Ev'n his hard heart is soften'd, and he hears
Her voice with pity; he respects her tears;
His stubborn features half admit a smile,
And his tone softens—"Well! I'll wait awhile."

Pity! a man so good, so mild, so meek,
At such an age, should have his bread to seek;
And all those rude and fierce attacks to dread,
That are more harrowing than the want of bread;
Ah! who shall whisper to that misery peace!
And say that want and insolence shall cease?
"But why not publish?"—those who know too well,
Dealers in Greek, are fearful 't will not sell;
Then he himself is timid, troubled, slow,
Nor likes his labours nor his griefs to show;
The hope of fame may in his heart have place,
But he has dread and horror of disgrace;
Nor has he that confiding, easy way,
That might his learning and himself display;
But to his work he from the world retreats,
And frets and glories o'er the favourite sheets.

ROMAN CATHOLICS OF THE BOROUGH

SEE next our several Sects,—but first behold
The Church of Rome, who here is poor and old:
Use not triumphant rail'ry, or, at least,
Let not thy mother be a whore and beast;
Great was her pride indeed in ancient times,
Yet shall we think of nothing but her crimes?
Exalted high above all earthly things,
She placed her foot upon the neck of kings;
But some have deeply since avenged the crown,
And thrown her glory and her honours down;
Nor neck nor ear can she of kings command,
Nor place a foot upon her own fair land.

Among her sons, with us a quiet few,
Obscure themselves, her ancient state review,
And fond and melancholy glances cast
On power insulted, and on triumph past:
They look, they can but look, with many a sigh,
On sacred buildings doom'd in dust to lie;
"On seats," they tell, "where priests mid tapers dim
"Breathed the warm prayer, or tuned the midnight hymn;
"Where trembling penitents their guilt confess'd,
"Where want had succour, and contrition rest;

"There weary men from trouble found relief,
"There men in sorrow found repose from grief:
"To scenes like these the fainting soul retired;
"Revenge and anger in these cells expired;
"By pity soothed, remorse lost half her fears,
"And soften'd pride dropp'd penitential tears.

"Then convent walls and nunnery spires arose,
"In pleasant spots which monk or abbot chose;
"When counts and barons saints devoted fed,
"And making cheap exchange had pray'r for bread.

"Now all is lost, the earth where abbeys stood
"Is layman's land, the glebe, the stream, the wood;
"His oxen low where monks retired to eat,
"His cows repose upon the prior's seat;
"And wanton doves within the cloisters bill,
"Where the chaste votary warr'd with wanton will."

Such is the change they mourn, but they restrain
The rage of grief, and passively complain.

JEWS OF THE BOROUGH

JEWS are with us, but far unlike to those
Who, led by David, warr'd with Israel's foes;
Unlike to those whom his imperial son
Taught truths divine—the Preacher Solomon:
Nor war nor wisdom yield our Jews delight;
They will not study, and they dare not fight.

These are, with us, a slavish, knavish crew,
Shame and dishonour to the name of Jew;
The poorest masters of the meanest arts,
With cunning heads, and cold and cautious hearts;
They grope their dirty way to petty gains,
While poorly paid for their nefarious pains.

Amazing race! deprived of land and laws,
A general language, and a public cause;
With a religion none can now obey,
With a reproach that none can take away:
A people still, whose common ties are gone;
Who, mix'd with every race, are lost in none.

What said their Prophet?—"Shouldst thou disobey,
"The Lord shall take thee from thy land away;
"Thou shalt a by-word and a proverb be,
"And all shall wonder at thy woes and thee;

"Daughter and son shalt thou, while captive, have,
"And see them made the bondmaid and the slave;
"He whom thou leav'st, the Lord thy God, shall bring
"War to thy country on an eagle-wing:
"A people strong and dreadful to behold,
"Stern to the young, remorseless to the old;
"Masters whose speech thou canst not understand,
"By cruel signs shall give the harsh command:
"Doubtful of life shalt thou by night, by day,
"For grief, and dread, and trouble pine away;
"Thy evening wish,—Would God I saw the sun!
"Thy morning sigh,—Would God the day were done!
"Thus shalt thou suffer, and to distant times
"Regret thy misery, and lament thy crimes."

A part there are, whom doubtless man might trust,
Worthy as wealthy, pure, religious, just;
They who with patience, yet with rapture look
On the strong promise of the Sacred Book:
As unfulfill'd th' endearing words they view,
And blind to truth, yet own their prophets true;
Well pleased they look for Sion's coming state,
Nor think of Julian's boast and Julian's fate.

THE POOR AND THEIR DWELLINGS

OUR Poor, how feed we?"—To the most we give
A weekly dole, and at their homes they live;—
Others together dwell,—but when they come
To the low roof, they see a kind of home,
A social people whom they've ever known,
With their own thoughts, and manners like their own.

At her old house, her dress, her air the same,
I see mine ancient Letter-loving dame:
"Learning, my child," said she, "shall fame command;
"Learning is better worth than house or land—
"For houses perish, lands are gone and spent;
"In learning then excel, for that's most excellent."
"And what her learning?"—'Tis with awe to look
In every verse throughout one sacred book;
From this her joy, her hope, her peace is sought;
This she has learned, and she is nobly taught.

With her a harmless Idiot we behold,
Who hoards up silver shells for shining gold:
These he preserves, with unremitted care,
To buy a seat, and reign the Borough's mayor:
Alas!—who could th' ambitious changeling tell,
That what he sought our rulers dared to sell?

Near these a Sailor, in that hut of thatch
(A fish-boat's cabin is its nearest match),
Dwells, and the dungeon is to him a seat,
Large as he wishes—in his view complete:
A lockless coffer and a lidless hutch
That hold his stores, have room for twice as much:
His one spare shirt, long glass, and iron box,
Lie all in view; no need has he for locks:
Here he abides, and, as our strangers pass,
He shows the shipping, he presents the glass;
He makes (unask'd) their ports and business known,
And (kindly heard) turns quickly to his own,
Of noble captains, heroes every one,—
You might as soon have made the steeple run:
And then his messmates, if you're pleased to stay,
He'll one by one the gallant souls display,
And as the story verges to an end,
He'll wind from deed to deed, from friend to friend;
He'll speak of those long lost, the brave of old,
As princes gen'rous and as heroes bold;
Then will his feelings rise, till you may trace
Gloom, like a cloud, frown o'er his manly face,—
And then a tear or two, which sting his pride;
These he will dash indignantly aside,
And splice his tale;—now take him from his cot,
And for some cleaner berth exchange his lot,
How will he all that cruel aid deplore?
His heart will break, and he will fight no more.

Here is the poor old Merchant: he declined,
And, as they say, is not in perfect mind;

In his poor house, with one poor maiden friend,
Quiet he paces to his journey's end.

Rich in his youth, he traded and he fail'd;
Again he tried, again his fate prevail'd;
His spirits low and his exertions small,
He fell perforce, he seem'd decreed to fall:
A borough-place we gain'd him—in disgrace
For gross neglect, he quickly lost the place;
But still he kept a kind of sullen pride,
Striving his wants to hinder or to hide;
At length, compell'd by very need, in grief
He wrote a proud petition for relief.
"He did suppose a fall, like his, would prove
"Of force to wake their sympathy and love;
"Would make them feel the changes all may know,
"And stir them up a due regard to show."
His suit was granted;—to an ancient maid,
Relieved herself, relief for him was paid:
Here they together (meet companions) dwell,
And dismal tales of man's misfortunes tell:
"'Twas not a world for them, God help them! they
"Could not deceive, nor flatter, nor betray;
"But there's a happy change, a scene to come,
"And they, God help them! shall be soon at home."

If these no pleasures nor enjoyments gain,
Still none their spirits nor their speech restrain;
They sigh at ease, 'mid comforts they complain.
The poor will grieve, the poor will weep and sigh,
Both when they know, and when they know not why;
But we our bounty with such care bestow,
That cause for grieving they shall seldom know.

Your Plan I love not; *—with a number you
Have placed your poor, your pitiable few:
There, in one house, throughout their lives to be,
The pauper-palace which they hate to see:
That giant building, that high bounding wall,
Those bare-worn walks, that lofty thund'ring hall!
That large loud clock, which tolls each dreaded hour,
Those gates and locks, and all those signs of power;
It is a prison, with a milder name,
Which few inhabit without dread or shame.

Be it agreed—the Poor who hither come
Partake of plenty, seldom found at home;
That airy rooms and decent beds are meant
To give the poor by day, by night, content;
That none are frighten'd, once admitted here,
By the stern looks of lordly Overseer:
Grant that the Guardians of the place attend,
And ready ear to each petition lend;
That they desire the grieving poor to show
What ills they feel, what partial acts they know,
Not without promise, nay desire to heal
Each wrong they suffer, and each woe they feel.

Alas! their sorrows in their bosoms dwell;
They've much to suffer, but have nought to tell;
They have no evil in the place to state,
And dare not say, it is the house they hate:
They own there's granted all such place can give,
But live repining, for 'tis there they live.

* A plan which was, notwithstanding, made universal under the "New Poor-Law Act," Crabbe thus protested in advance. (See Note A.)

Grandsires are there, who now no more must see,
No more must nurse upon the trembling knee,
The lost loved daughter's infant progeny:
Like death's dread mansion, this allows not place
For joyful meetings of a kindred race.

Is not the matron there, to whom the son
Was wont at each declining day to run;
He (when his toil was over) gave delight,
By lifting up the latch, and one "Good-night?"
Yes, she is here; but nightly to her door
The son, still lab'ring, can return no more.
Widows are here, who in their huts were left,
Of husbands, children, plenty, ease bereft;
Yet all that grief within the humble shed
Was soften'd, soften'd in the humble bed:
But here, in all its force, remains the grief,
And not one soft'ning object for relief.

Who can, when here, the social neighbour meet?
Who learn the story current in the street?
Who to the long-known intimate impart
Facts they have learn'd or feelings of the heart?—
They talk indeed, but who can choose a friend,
Or seek companions at their journey's end?
Here are not those whom they, when infants, knew;
Who, with like fortune, up to manhood grew;
Who, with like troubles, at old age arrived;
Who, like themselves, the joy of life survived;
Whom time and custom so familiar made,
That looks the meaning in the mind convey'd:

But here to strangers, words nor looks impart
The various movements of the suffering heart;
Nor will that heart with those alliance own,
To whom its views and hopes are all unknown.

What if no grievous fears their lives annoy,
Is it not worse no prospects to enjoy?
'Tis cheerless living in such bounded view,
With nothing dreadful, but with nothing new;
Nothing to bring them joy, to make them weep,—
The day itself is, like the night, asleep;
Or on the sameness if a break be made,
'Tis by some pauper to his grave convey'd;
By smuggled news from neighb'ring village told,
News never true, or truth a twelvemonth old;
By some new inmate doom'd with them to dwell,
Or justice come to see that all goes well;
Or change of room, or hour of leave to crawl
On the black footway winding with the wall,
Till the stern bell forbids, or master's sterner call.

Then too I own, it grieves me to behold
Those ever virtuous, helpless now and old,
By all for care and industry approved,
For truth respected, and for temper loved;
And who, by sickness and misfortune tried,
Gave want its worth and poverty its pride:
I own it grieves me to behold them sent
From their old home; 'tis pain, 'tis punishment,
To leave each scene familiar, every face,
For a new people and a stranger race;

For those who, sunk in sloth and dead to shame,
From scenes of guilt with daring spirits came.

Here the good pauper, losing all the praise
By worthy deeds acquired in better days,
Breathes a few months, then, to his chamber led,
Expires, while strangers prattle round his bed.

The grateful hunter, when his horse is old,
Wills not the useless favourite to be sold;
He knows his former worth, and gives him place
In some fair pasture, till he runs his race:
But has the labourer, has the seaman, done
Less worthy service, though not dealt to one?
Shall we not then contribute to their ease,
In their old haunts, where ancient objects please?
That, till their sight shall fail them, they may trace
The well-known prospect and the long-loved face.

The noble oak, in distant ages seen,
With far-stretched boughs and foliage fresh and green,
Though now its bare and forky branches show
How much it lacks the vital warmth below,
The stately ruin yet our wonder gains,
Nay, moves our pity, without thought of pains:
Much more shall real wants and cares of age
Our gentler passions in their cause engage;—
Drooping and burthen'd with a weight of years,
What venerable ruin man appears!
How worthy pity, love, respect, and grief—
He claims protection—he compels relief;—

And shall we send him from our view, to brave
The storms abroad, whom we at home might save,
And let a stranger dig our ancient brother's grave?
No!—we will shield him from the storm he fears,
And when he falls, embalm him with our tears.

Farewell to these; but all our poor to know,
Let's seek the winding Lane, the narrow Row,
Suburban prospects, where the traveller stops
To see the sloping tenement on props,
With building-yards immix'd, and humble sheds and shops;
Where the Cross-Keys and Plumber's Arms invite
Laborious men to taste their coarse delight;
Where the low porches, stretching from the door,
Gave some distinction in the days of yore,
Yet now neglected, more offend the eye,
By gloom and ruin, than the cottage by.

Here is no pavement, no inviting shop,
To give us shelter when compell'd to stop;
But plashy puddles stand along the way,
Fill'd by the rain of one tempestuous day;
And these so closely to the buildings run,
That you must ford them, for you cannot shun;
Though here and there convenient bricks are laid,
And door-side heaps afford their dubious aid.

Lo! yonder shed; observe its garden-ground,
With the low paling, form'd of wreck, around;

There dwells a Fisher; if you view his boat,
With bed and barrel—'tis his house afloat;
Look at his house, where ropes, nets, blocks, abound,
Tar, pitch, and oakum—'tis his boat aground:
That space enclosed, but little he regards,
Spread o'er with relics of masts, sails, and yards:
Fish by the wall, on spit of elder, rest,
Of all his food, the cheapest and the best,
By his own labour caught, for his own hunger dress'd.
Here our reformers come not; none object
To paths polluted, or upbraid neglect;
None care that ashy heaps at doors are cast,
That coal-dust flies along the blinding blast:
None heed the stagnant pools on either side,
Where new-launch'd ships of infant-sailors ride:
Rodneys in rags here British valour boast,
And lisping Nelsons fright the Gallic coast.
They fix the rudder, set the swelling sail,
They point the bowsprit, and they blow the gale:
True to her port, the frigate scuds away,
And o'er that frowning ocean finds her bay:
Her owner rigg'd her, and he knows her worth,
And sees her, fearless, gunwale-deep go forth;
Dreadless he views his sea, by breezes curl'd,
When inch-high billows vex the watery world.

There, fed by food they love, to rankest size,
Around the dwellings docks and wormwood rise;
Here the strong mallow strikes her slimy root,
Here the dull nightshade hangs her deadly fruit;
On hills of dust the henbane's faded green,
And pencil'd flower of sickly scent is seen;

At the wall's base the fiery nettle springs,
With fruit globose and fierce with poison'd stings;
Above (the growth of many a year) is spread
The yellow level of the stone-crop's bed;
In every chink delights the fern to grow,
With glossy leaf and tawny bloom below:
These, with our sea-weeds, rolling up and down,
Form the contracted Flora of the town.

Say, wilt thou more of scenes so sordid know?
Then will I lead thee down the dusty Row;
By the warm alley and the long close lane,—
There mark the fractured door and paper'd pane,
Where flags the noontide air, and, as we pass,
We fear to breathe the putrefying mass:
But fearless yonder matron; she disdains
To sigh for zephyrs from ambrosial plains;
But mends her meshes torn, and pours her lay
All in the stifling fervour of the day.
Her naked children round the alley run,
And roll'd in dust, are bronzed beneath the sun;
Or gambol round the dame, who, loosely dress'd,
Woos the coy breeze to fan the open breast:
She, once a handmaid, strove by decent art
To charm her sailor's eye and touch his heart;
Her bosom then was veil'd in kerchief clean,
And fancy left to form the charms unseen.
But when a wife, she lost her former care,
Nor thought on charms, nor time for dress could spare;
Careless she found her friends who dwelt beside,
No rival beauty kept alive her pride:

Still in her bosom virtue keeps her place,
But decency is gone, the virtues' guard and grace.

See that long boarded Building!—By these stairs
Each humble tenant to that home repairs—
By one large window lighted—it was made
For some bold project, some design in trade:
This fail'd,—and one, a humourist in his way,
(Ill was the humour,) bought it in decay;
Nor will he sell, repair, or take it down;
'Tis his,—what cares he for the talk of town?
"No! he will let it to the poor;—a home
"Where he delights to see the creatures come:"
"They may be thieves;"—"Well, so are richer men;"
"Or idlers, cheats, or prostitutes;"—"What then?"
"Outcasts pursued by justice, vile and base;"—
"They need the more his pity and the place."

In this vast room, each place by habit fix'd,
Are sexes, families, and ages mix'd—
To union forced by crime, by fear, by need,
And all in morals and in modes agreed;
Some ruin'd men, who from mankind remove;
Some ruin'd females, who yet talk of love;
And some grown old in idleness—the prey
To vicious spleen, still railing through the day;
And need and misery, vice and danger bind
In sad alliance each degraded mind.

That window view!—oil'd paper and old glass
Stain the strong rays, which, though impeded, pass,

And give a dusty warmth to that huge room,
The conquer'd sunshine's melancholy gloom;
When all those western rays, without so bright,
Within become a ghastly glimmering light,
As pale and faint upon the floor they fall,
Or feebly gleam on the opposing wall:
That floor, once oak, now pieced with fir unplaned,
Or, where not pieced, in places bored and stain'd;
That wall once whiten'd, now an odious sight,
Stain'd with all hues, except its ancient white;
The only door is fasten'd by a pin,
Or stubborn bar, that none may hurry in:
For this poor room, like rooms of greater pride,
At times contains what prudent men would hide.

Where'er the floor allows an even space,
Chalking and marks of various games have place;
Boys, without foresight, pleased in halters swing;
On a fix'd hook men cast a flying ring;
While gin and snuff their female neighbours share,
And the black beverage in the fractured ware.
On swinging shelf are things incongruous stored,—
Scraps of their food,— the cards and cribbage-board,—
With pipes and pouches; while on peg below,
Hang a lost member's fiddle and its bow:
That still reminds them how he'd dance and play,
Ere sent untimely to the Convicts' Bay.
Here by a curtain, by a blanket there,
Are various beds conceal'd, but none with care;
Where some by day and some by night, as best
Suit their employments, seek uncertain rest;

The drowsy children at their pleasure creep
To the known crib, and there securely sleep.
  Each end contains a grate, and these beside
Are hung utensils for their boil'd and fried—
All used at any hour, by night, by day,
As suit the purse, the person, or the prey.
  Above the fire, the mantel-shelf contains
Of china-ware some poor unmatch'd remains;
There many a tea-cup's gaudy fragment stands,
All placed by vanity's unwearied hands;
For here she lives, e'en here she looks about,
To find some small consoling objects out:
Nor heed these Spartan dames their house, nor sit
'Mid cares domestic,—they nor sew nor knit;
But of their fate discourse, their ways, their wars
With arm'd authorities, their 'scapes and scars:
These lead to present evils, and a cup,
If fortune grant it, winds description up.
  High hung at either end, and next the wall,
Two ancient mirrors show the forms of all,
In all their force;—these aid them in their dress,
But with the good, the evils too express,
Doubling each look of care, each token of distress.

ELLEN ORFORD

OBSERVE yon tenement, apart and small,
Where the wet pebbles shine upon the wall;
Where the low benches lean beside the door,
And the red paling bounds the space before;
Where thrift and lavender, and lad's-love * bloom,—
That humble dwelling is the widow's home;
There live a pair, for various fortunes known,
But the blind *Ellen* will relate her own;—

"My father died—again my mother wed,
"And found the comforts of her life were fled;
"Her angry husband, vex'd through half his years
"By loss and troubles, fill'd her soul with fears:
"Their children many, and 'twas my poor place
"To nurse and wait on all the infant race;
"Labour and hunger were indeed my part,
"And should have strengthen'd an erroneous heart.

"So, amid sorrow much and little cheer—
"A common case—I pass'd my twentieth year;
"Then in my days of bloom, of health and youth,
"One, much above me, vow'd his love and truth:

* The lad's or boy's love, of some counties, is the plant southernwood, the *Artemisia abrotanum* of botanists.

"We often met, he dreading to be seen,
"And much I question'd what such dread might mean;
"Yet I believed him true; my simple heart
"And undirected reason took his part.

"Can he who loves me, whom I love, deceive?
"Can I such wrong of one so kind believe,
"Who lives but in my smile, who trembles when I grieve?

"He dared not marry, but we met to prove
"What sad encroachments and deceits has love:
"Weak that I was, when he, rebuked, withdrew,
"I let him see that I was wretched too.

"Happy the lovers class'd alike in life,
"Or happier yet the rich endowing wife;
"But most aggrieved the fond believing maid,
"Of her rich lover tenderly afraid:
"You judge th' event; for grievous was my fate,
"Painful to feel, and shameful to relate:
"Ah! sad it was my burthen to sustain,
"When the least misery was the dread of pain;
"When I had grieving told him my disgrace,
"And plainly mark'd indifference in his face.

"Hard! with these fears and terrors to behold
"The cause of all, the faithless lover, cold;
"Impatient grown at every wish denied,
"And barely civil, soothed and gratified;
"Peevish when urged to think of vows so strong,
"And angry when I spake of crime and wrong.

"All this I felt, and still the sorrow grew,
"Because I felt that I deserved it too.

"When known my shame, I, soon expell'd from home,
"With a frail sister shared a hovel's gloom;
"There barely fed—(what could I more request?)
"My infant slumberer sleeping at my breast,
"I from my window saw his blooming bride,
"And my seducer smiling at her side;
"Hope lived till then; I sank upon the floor,
"And grief and thought and feeling were no more:
"Although revived, I judged that life would close,
"And went to rest, to wonder that I rose:
"My dreams were dismal,—wheresoe'er I stray'd,
"I seem'd ashamed, alarm'd, despised, betray'd;
"Always in grief, in guilt, disgraced, forlorn,
"Mourning that one so weak, so vile, was born;
"The earth a desert, tumult in the sea,
"The birds affrighten'd fled from tree to tree,
"Obscured the setting sun, and everything like me:
"But Heav'n had mercy, and my need at length
"Urged me to labour, and renew'd my strength.
"I strove for patience as a sinner must,
"Yet felt th' opinion of the world unjust:
"There was my lover, in his joy esteem'd,
"And I, in my distress, as guilty deem'd;
"Yet sure, not all the guilt and shame belong
"To her who feels and suffers for the wrong.

"Four years were past; I might again have found
"Some erring wish, but for another wound:

"Lovely my daughter grew, her face was fair,
"But no expression ever brighten'd there;
"I doubted long, and vainly strove to make
"Some certain meaning of the words she spake;
"But meaning there was none, and I survey'd
"With dread the beauties of my idiot-maid.
"Still I submitted;—Oh! 'tis meet and fit
"In all we feel to make the heart submit;
"Gloomy and calm my days, but I had then,
"It seem'd, attractions for the eyes of men:
"The sober master of a decent trade
"O'erlook'd my errors, and his offer made;
"Reason assented:—true, my heart denied,
"'But thou,' I said, 'shalt be no more my guide.'

"When wed, our toil and trouble, pains and care,
"Of means to live procured us humble share;
"Five were our sons,—and we, though careful, found
"Our hopes declining as the year came round:
"For I perceived, yet would not soon perceive,
"My husband stealing from my view to grieve:
"Silent he grew, and when he spoke he sigh'd,
"And surly look'd, and peevishly replied:
"Pensive by nature, he had gone of late
"To those who preach'd of destiny and fate,
"Of things foredoom'd, and of election grace,
"And how in vain we strive to run our race;
"That all by works and moral worth we gain
"Is to perceive our care and labour vain;
"That still the more we pay, our debts the more remain;

"That he who feels not the mysterious call,
"Lies bound in sin, still grov'ling from the fall.
"My husband felt not:—our persuasion, prayer,
"And our best reason, darken'd his despair;
"His very nature changed; he now reviled
"My former conduct,—he reproach'd my child:
"He talked of bastard slips, and cursed his bed,
"And from our kindness to concealment fled;
"For ever to some evil change inclined,
"To every gloomy thought he lent his mind,
"Nor rest would give to us, nor rest himself could find;
"His son suspended saw him, long bereft
"Of life, nor prospect of revival left.

"With him died all our prospects, and once more
"I shared the allotments of the parish poor;
"They took my children too, and this I know
"Was just and lawful, but I felt the blow:
"My idiot-maid and one unhealthy boy
"Were left, a mother's misery and her joy.

"Three sons I follow'd to the grave, and one—
"Oh! can I speak of that unhappy son?
"Would all the memory of that time were fled,
"And all those horrors, with my child, were dead!
"Before the world seduced him, what a grace
"And smile of gladness shone upon his face!
"Then, he had knowledge; finely would he write;
"Study to him was pleasure and delight;
"Great was his courage, and but few could stand
"Against the sleight and vigour of his hand;

"The maidens loved him;—when he came to die,
"No, not the coldest could suppress a sigh:
"Here I must cease—how can I say, my child
"Was by the bad of either sex beguiled?
"Worst of the bad—they taught him that the laws
"Made wrong and right; there was no other cause,
"That all religion was the trade of priests,
"And men, when dead, must perish like the beasts:—
"And he, so lively and so gay before——
"Ah! spare a mother—I can tell no more.

"Int'rest was made that they should not destroy
"The comely form of my deluded boy—
"But pardon came not; damp the place and deep
"Where he was kept, as they'd a tiger keep;
"For he, unhappy! had before them all
"Vow'd he'd escape, whatever might befall.

"He'd means of dress, and dress'd beyond his means,
"And so to see him in such dismal scenes,
"I cannot speak it—cannot bear to tell
"Of that sad hour—I heard the passing bell!

"Slowly they went; he smiled, and look'd so smart,
"Yet sure he shudder'd when he saw the cart,
"And gave a look—until my dying day,
"That look will never from my mind away:
"Oft as I sit, and ever in my dreams,
"I see that look, and they have heard my screams.

"Now let me speak no more—yet all declared
"That one so young, in pity, should be spared,
"And one so manly;—on his graceful neck,
"That chains of jewels might be proud to deck,
"To a small mole a mother's lips have press'd,—
"And there the cord—my breath is sore oppress'd.

"I now can speak again:—my elder boy
"Was that year drown'd,—a seaman in a hoy:
"He left a numerous race; of these would some
"In their young troubles to my cottage come,
"And these I taught—an humble teacher I—
"Upon their heavenly Parent to rely.

"Alas! I needed such reliance more:
"My idiot-girl, so simply gay before,
"Now wept in pain; some wretch had found a time,
"Depraved and wicked, for that coward-crime;
"I had indeed my doubt, but I suppress'd
"The thought that day and night disturb'd my rest;
"She and that sick-pale brother—but why strive
"To keep the terrors of that time alive?

"The hour arrived, the new, th' undreaded pain,
"That came with violence, and yet came in vain.
"I saw her die: her brother too is dead;
"Nor own'd such crime—what is it that I dread?

"The parish aid withdrawn, I look'd around,
"And in my school a bless'd subsistence found—
"My winter-calm of life: to be of use
"Would pleasant thoughts and heavenly hopes produce;!

"I loved them all; it soothed me to presage
"The various trials of their riper age,
"Then dwell on mine, and bless the Power who gave
"Pains to correct us, and remorse to save.

"Yes! these were days of peace, but they are past,—
"A trial came, I will believe, a last;
"I lost my sight, and my employment gone,
"Useless I live, but to the day live on;
"Those eyes, which long the light of heaven enjoy'd,
"Were not by pain, by agony destroy'd:
"My senses fail not all; I speak, I pray;
"By night my rest, my food I take by day;
"And, as my mind looks cheerful to my end,
"I love mankind, and call my God my friend."

PETER GRIMES

OLD *Peter Grimes* made fishing his employ,
His wife he cabin'd with him and his boy,
To town came quiet Peter with his fish,
And had of all a civil word and wish.
He left his trade upon the Sabbath-day,
And took young Peter in his hand to pray:
But soon the stubborn boy from care broke loose,
At first refused, then added his abuse:
His father's love he scorn'd, his power defied,
But being drunk, wept sorely when he died.

Yes! then he wept, and to his mind there came
Much of his conduct, and he felt the shame,—
How he had oft the good old man reviled,
And never paid the duty of a child;
How, when the father in his Bible read,
He in contempt and anger left the shed:
"It is the word of life," the parent cried;
—"This is the life itself," the boy replied;
And while old Peter in amazement stood,
Gave the hot spirit to his boiling blood:—
How he, with oath and furious speech, began
To prove his freedom and assert the man;

And when the parent check'd his impious rage,
How he had cursed the tyranny of age,—
Nay, once had dealt the sacrilegious blow
On his bare head, and laid his parent low;
The father groan'd—"If thou art old," said he,
"And hast a son—thou wilt remember me."

On an inn-settle, in his maudlin grief,
This he revolved, and drank for his relief.

Now lived the youth in freedom, but debarr'd
From constant pleasure, and he thought it hard;
Hard that he could not every wish obey,
But must awhile relinquish ale and play;
Hard! that he could not to his cards attend,
But must acquire the money he would spend.

With greedy eye he look'd on all he saw,
He knew not justice, and he laugh'd at law;
On all he mark'd, he stretch'd his ready hand;
He fish'd by water and he filch'd by land:
Oft in the night has Peter dropp'd his oar,
Fled from his boat, and sought for prey on shore;
Oft up the hedgerow glided, on his back
Bearing the orchard's produce in a sack,
Or farm-yard load, tugg'd fiercely from the stack;
And as these wrongs to greater numbers rose,
The more he look'd on all men as his foes.

He built a mud-wall'd hovel, where he kept
His various wealth, and there he oft-times slept;
But no success could please his cruel soul,
He wish'd for one to trouble and control.

Peter had heard there were in London then,—
Still have they being!—workhouse-clearing men,
Who, undisturb'd by feelings just or kind,
Would parish-boys to needy tradesmen bind:
They in their want a trifling sum would take,
And toiling slaves of piteous orphans make.

Such Peter sought, and when a lad was found,
The sum was dealt him, and the slave was bound.
Some few in town observed in Peter's trap
A boy, with jacket blue and woollen cap;
But none inquired how Peter used the rope,
Or what the bruise, that made the stripling stoop;
None could the ridges on his back behold,
None sought him shiv'ring in the winter's cold;
None put the question,—"Peter, dost thou give
"The boy his food?—What, man! the lad must live:
"Consider, Peter, let the child have bread,
"He'll serve thee better if he's stroked and fed."
None reason'd thus—and some, on hearing cries,
Said calmly, "Grimes is at his exercise."

Pin'd, beaten, cold, pinch'd, threatened, and abused—
His efforts punish'd and his food refused,—
Awake tormented,—soon aroused from sleep,—
Struck if he wept, and yet compell'd to weep,
The trembling boy dropp'd down and strove to pray,
Received a blow, and trembling turn'd away,
Or sobb'd and hid his piteous face;—while he,
The savage master, grinn'd in horrid glee:

He'd now the power he ever loved to show,
A feeling being subject to his blow.

Thus lived the lad, in hunger, peril, pain,
His tears despised, his supplications vain:
Compell'd by fear to lie, by need to steal,
His bed uneasy and unbless'd his meal,
For three sad years the boy his tortures bore,
And then his pains and trials were no more.

"How died he, Peter?" when the people said,
He growl'd—"I found him lifeless in his bed;"
Then tried for softer tone, and sigh'd, "Poor Sam is dead."
Yet murmurs were there, and some questions ask'd—
How he was fed, how punish'd, and how task'd?
Much they suspected, but they little proved,
And Peter pass'd untroubled and unmoved.

Another boy with equal ease was found,
The money granted, and the victim bound;
And what his fate?—One night it chanced he fell
From the boat's mast and perish'd in her well,
Where fish were living kept, and where the boy
(So reason'd men) could not himself destroy:—

"Yes! so it was," said Peter, "in his play,
"(For he was idle both by night and day,)
"He climb'd the main-mast and then fell below;"—
Then show'd his corpse, and pointed to the blow:
"What said the jury?"—they were long in doubt,
But sturdy Peter faced the matter out:

So they dismiss'd him, saying at the time,
"Keep fast your hatchway when you've boys who climb."

Thus all his fears the verdict set aside,
And at the slave-shop Peter still applied.

Then came a boy, of manners soft and mild,—
Our seamen's wives with grief beheld the child;
All thought (the poor themselves) that he was one
Of gentle blood, some noble sinner's son,
Who had, belike, deceived some humble maid,
Whom he had first seduced and then betray'd:—
However this, he seem'd a gracious lad,
In grief submissive and with patience sad.

Passive he labour'd, till his slender frame
Bent with his loads, and he at length was lame:
Strange that a frame so weak could bear so long
The grossest insult and the foulest wrong;
But there were causes—in the town they gave
Fire, food, and comfort, to the gentle slave;
And though stern Peter, with a cruel hand,
And knotted rope, enforced the rude command,
Yet he consider'd what he'd lately felt,
And his vile blows with selfish pity dealt.

One day such draughts the cruel fisher made,
He could not vend them in his borough-trade,
But sail'd for London-mart: the boy was ill,
But ever humbled to his master's will;
And on the river, where they smoothly sail'd,
He strove with terror and awhile prevail'd;

But new to danger on the angry sea,
He clung affrighten'd to his master's knee:
The boat grew leaky and the wind was strong,
Rough was the passage and the time was long;
His liquor fail'd, and Peter's wrath arose,—
No more is known—the rest we must suppose,
Or learn of Peter:—Peter says, he "spied
"The stripling's danger and for harbour tried;
"Meantime the fish, and then th' apprentice died."

The pitying women raised a clamour round,
And weeping said, "Thou hast thy 'prentice drown'd."

Now the stern man was summon'd to the hall,
To tell his tale before the burghers all:
He gave th' account; profess'd the lad he loved,
And kept his brazen features all unmoved.

The mayor himself with tone severe replied,—
"Henceforth with thee shall never boy abide;
"Hire thee a freeman, whom thou durst not beat,
"But who, in thy despite, will sleep and eat:
"Free thou art now!—again shouldst thou appear,
"Thou'lt find thy sentence, like thy soul, severe."

Alas! for Peter not a helping hand,
So was he hated, could he now command;
Alone he row'd his boat, alone he cast
His nets beside, or made his anchor fast;
To hold a rope or hear a curse was none,—
He toil'd and rail'd; he groan'd and swore alone.

Thus by himself compell'd to live each day,
To wait for certain hours the tide's delay;
At the same time the same dull views to see,
The bounding marsh-bank and the blighted tree;
The water only, when the tides were high,
When low, the mud half-cover'd and half-dry;
The sun-burnt tar that blisters on the planks,
And bank-side stakes in their uneven ranks;
Heaps of entangled weeds that slowly float,
As the tide rolls by the impeded boat.

When tides were neap, and, in the sultry day,
Through the tall bounding mud-banks made their way,
Which on each side rose swelling, and below
The dark warm flood ran silently and slow;
There anchoring, Peter chose from man to hide,
There hang his head, and view the lazy tide
In its hot slimy channel slowly glide;
Where the small eels that left the deeper way
For the warm shore, within the shallows play;
Where gaping muscles, left upon the mud,
Slope their slow passage to the fallen flood;—
Here dull and hopeless he'd lie down and trace
How sidelong crabs had scrawl'd their crooked race;
Or sadly listen to the tuneless cry
Of fishing gull or clanging golden-eye;
What time the sea-birds to the marsh would come,
And the loud bittern, from the bulrush home,
Gave from the salt-ditch side the bellowing boom:
He nursed the feelings these dull scenes produce,
And loved to stop beside the opening sluice;

Where the small stream, confined in narrow bound,
Ran with a dull, unvaried, sadd'ning sound,
Where all, presented to the eye or ear,
Oppress'd the soul with misery, grief, and fear.

Besides these objects, there were places three,
Which Peter seem'd with certain dread to see;
When he drew near them he would turn from each,
And loudly whistle till he pass'd the reach.

A change of scene to him brought no relief,
In town, 'twas plain, men took him for a thief:
The sailors' wives would stop him in the street,
And say, "Now, Peter, thou'st no boy to beat:"
Infants at play, when they perceived him, ran,
Warning each other—"That's the wicked man:"
He growl'd an oath, and in an angry tone
Cursed the whole place and wish'd to be alone.

Alone he was, the same dull scenes in view,
And still more gloomy in his sight they grew:
Though man he hated, yet employ'd alone
At bootless labour, he would swear and groan,
Cursing the shoals that glided by the spot,
And gulls that caught them when his arts could not.

Cold nervous tremblings shook his sturdy frame,
And strange disease—he couldn't say the name;
Wild were his dreams, and oft he rose in fright,
Waked by his view of horrors in the night,—
And though he felt forsaken, grieved at heart,
To think he lived from all mankind apart;
Yet, if a man approach'd, in terrors he would start.

A winter pass'd since Peter saw the town,
And summer lodgers were again come down;
These, idly curious, with their glasses spied
The ships in bay as anchor'd for the tide,—
The river's craft,—the bustle of the quay,—
And seaport views, which landmen love to see.

One, up the river, had a man and boat
Seen day by day, now anchor'd, now afloat;
Fisher he seem'd, yet used no net nor hook;
Of sea-fowl swimming by no heed he took,
But on the gliding waves still fix'd his lazy look:
At certain stations he would view the stream,
As if he stood bewildered in a dream.

This known, some curious, some in pity went,
And others question'd — "Wretch, dost thou repent?"
He heard, he trembled, and in fear resign'd
His boat: new terror fill'd his restless mind;
Furious he grew, and up the country ran,
And there they seized him—a distemper'd man:—
Him we received, and to a parish-bed,
Follow'd and cursed, the groaning man was led.

Here when they saw him, whom they used to shun,
A lost, lone man, so harass'd and undone;
Our gentle females, ever prompt to feel,
Perceived compassion on their anger steal.
A Priest too came, to whom his words are told;
And all the signs they shudder'd to behold.

"Look! look!" they cried; "his limbs with horror shake,
"And as he grinds his teeth, what noise they make!
"How glare his angry eyes, and yet he's not awake:
"See! what cold drops upon his forehead stand,
"And how he clenches that broad bony hand."

The Priest attending, found he spoke at times
As one alluding to his fears and crimes;
"It was the fall," he mutter'd, "I can show
"The manner how,—I never struck a blow:"—
And then aloud,—"Unhand me, free my chain;
"On oath he fell—it struck him to the brain:—
"Why ask my father?—that old man will swear
"Against my life; besides, he wasn't there:—
"What, all agreed?—Am I to die to-day?—
"My Lord, in mercy give me time to pray."

Then as they watch'd him, calmer he became,
And grew so weak he couldn't move his frame,
But murmuring spake—while they could see and hear
The start of terror and the groan of fear;
See the large dew-beads on his forehead rise,
And the cold death-drop glaze his sunken eyes;
Nor yet he died, but with unwonted force
Seem'd with some fancied being to discourse:
He knew not us, or with accustom'd art
He hid the knowledge, yet exposed his heart:
'Twas part confession and the rest defence,
A madman's tale, with gleams of waking sense.

"I'll tell you all," he said, "the very day
"When the old man first placed them in my way:
"My father's spirit—he who always tried
"To give me trouble, when he lived and died—
"When he was gone he could not be content
"To see my days in painful labour spent,
"But would appoint his meetings, and he made
"Me watch at these, and so neglect my trade.

"'Twas one hot noon, all silent, still, serene,
"No living being had I lately seen;
"I paddled up and down and dipp'd my net,
"But (such his pleasure) I could nothing get.
"And so I sat and look'd upon the stream,
"How it ran on, and felt as in a dream:
"But dream it was not: No!—I fix'd my eyes
"On the mid stream and saw the spirits rise:
"I saw my father on the water stand,
"And hold a thin pale boy in either hand:
"I would have struck them, but they knew th' intent,
"And smiled upon the oar, and down they went.

"Now, from that day, whenever I began
"To dip my net, there stood the hard old man—
"He and those boys; nor would the boat go by,
"But, gazing on the spirits, there was I:
"They bade me leap to death, but I was loth to die:
"And every day, as sure as day arose,
"Would these three spirits meet me ere the close;
"To hear and mark them daily was my doom,
"And 'Come,' they said, with weak, sad voices, 'come.'

"To row away, with all my strength I tried,
"But there were they, hard by me in the tide,
"The three unbodied forms — and 'Come,' still
'come,' they cried.

"Fathers should pity—but this old man shook
"His hoary locks, and froze me by a look:
"Thrice, when I struck them, through the water
came
"A hollow groan, that weaken'd all my frame:
"'Father!' said I, 'have mercy:'—he replied,
"I know not what—the angry spirit lied,—
"'Didst thou not draw thy knife?' said he:—'Twas
true,
"But I had pity and my arm withdrew:
"He cried for mercy, which I kindly gave,
"But he has no compassion in his grave.

"There were three places, where they ever rose,—
"The whole long river has not such as those—
"Places accursed, where, if a man remain,
"He'll see the things which strike him to the
brain;
"And there they made me on my paddle lean,
"And look at them for hours;—accursed scene!
"When they would glide to that smooth eddy-space,
"Then bid me leap and join them in the place.

"In one fierce summer-day, when my poor brain
"Was burning hot, and cruel was my pain,
"Then came this father-foe, and there he stood
"With his two boys again upon the flood:

"There was more mischief in their eyes, more glee,
"In their pale faces when they glared at me:
"Still did they force me on the oar to rest,
"And when they saw me fainting and oppress'd,
"He, with his hand, the old man, scoop'd the flood,
"And there came flame about him mix'd with blood;
"He bade me stoop and look upon the place,
"Then flung the hot-red liquor in my face.

"Still there they stood, and forced me to behold
"A place of horrors—they can not be told—
"Where the flood open'd, there I heard the shriek
"Of tortured guilt—no earthly tongue can speak:
"'All days alike!'"—But here he ceased, and gazed
On all around, affrighten'd and amazed;
Then dropp'd exhausted, and appear'd at rest,
Till the strong foe the vital powers possess'd;
Then with an inward, broken voice he cried,
"Again they come," and mutter'd as he died.

THE PRISONER'S DREAM *

HERE separate cells awhile in misery keep
Two doom'd to suffer: there they strive for sleep;
By day indulged, in larger space they range,
Their bondage certain, but their bounds have change.

One was a female, who had grievous ill
Wrought in revenge, and she enjoy'd it still:
With death before her, and her fate in view,
Unsated vengeance in her bosom grew:
Sullen she was and threat'ning; in her eye
Glared the stern triumph that she dared to die:
But first a being in the world must leave—
'Twas once reproach; 'twas now a short reprieve.

She was a pauper bound, who early gave
Her mind to vice and doubly was a slave:
Upbraided, beaten, held by rough control,
Revenge sustain'd, inspired, and fill'd her soul:
She fired a full-stored barn, confess'd the fact,
And laugh'd at law and justified the act:
Our gentle Vicar tried his powers in vain,
She answer'd not, or answer'd with disdain;
Th' approaching fate she heard without a sigh,
And neither cared to live nor fear'd to die.

* Part of the portion of "The Borough" called "Prisons."

Not so he felt, who with her was to pay
The forfeit, life—with dread he view'd the day,
And that short space which yet for him remain'd,
Till with his limbs his faculties were chain'd:
He paced his narrow bounds some ease to find,
But found it not,—no comfort reach'd his mind:
Each sense was palsied; when he tasted food,
He sigh'd and said, "Enough—'tis very good."
Since his dread sentence, nothing seem'd to be
As once it was—he seeing could not see,
Nor hearing, hear aright;—when first I came
Within his view, I fancied there was shame,
I judged resentment; I mistook the air,—
These fainter passions live not with despair;
Or but exist and die:—Hope, fear, and love,
Joy, doubt, and hate may other spirits move,
But touch not his, who every waking hour
Has one fix'd dread, and always feels its power.

"But will not Mercy?"—No! she cannot plead
For such an outrage;—'twas a cruel deed:
He stopp'd a timid traveller;—to his breast,
With oaths and curses, was the danger press'd:—
No! he must suffer; pity we may find
For one man's pangs, but must not wrong mankind.

Still I behold him, every thought employ'd
On one dire view!—all others are destroy'd;
This makes his features ghastly, gives the tone
Of his few words resemblance to a groan;
He takes his tasteless food, and when 'tis done,
Counts up his meals, now lessen'd by that one;

For expectation is on Time intent,
Whether he brings us joy or punishment.

Yes! e'en in sleep the impressions all remain,
He hears the sentence and he feels the chain;
He sees the judge and jury, when he shakes,
And loudly cries, "Not guilty," and awakes:
Then chilling tremblings o'er his body creep,
Till worn-out nature is compell'd to sleep.

Now comes the dream again: it shows each scene,
With each small circumstance that comes between—
The call to suffering and the very deed—
There crowds go with him, follow, and precede;
Some heartless shout, some pity, all condemn,
While he in fancied envy looks at them:
He seems the place for that sad act to see,
And dreams the very thirst which then will be:
A priest attends—it seems, the one he knew
In his best days, beneath whose care he grew.

At this his terrors take a sudden flight,
He sees his native village with delight;
The house, the chamber, where he once array'd
His youthful person; where he knelt and pray'd:
Then too the comforts he enjoy'd at home,
The days of joy; the joys themselves are come;—
The hours of innocence;—the timid look
Of his loved maid, when first her hand he took;
All now is present;—'tis a moment's gleam
Of former sunshine—stay, delightful dream!

Then come his sister and his village-friend,
And he will now the sweetest moments spend
Life has to yield;—No! never will he find
Again on earth such pleasure in his mind:
Pierced by no crime, and urged by no desire
For more than true and honest hearts require,
They feel the calm delight, and thus proceed
Through the green lane,—then linger in the mead,—
Stray o'er the heath in all its purple bloom,—
And pluck the blossom where the wild bees hum;
Then through the broomy bound with ease they pass,
And press the sandy sheep-walk's slender grass,
Where dwarfish flowers among the gorse are spread,
And the lamb browses by the linnet's bed;
Then 'cross the bounding brook they make their way
O'er its rough bridge—and there behold the bay!—
The ocean smiling to the fervid sun—
The waves that faintly fall and slowly run—
The ships at distance and the boats at hand;
And now they walk upon the sea-side sand,
Counting the number and what kind they be,
Ships softly sinking in the sleepy sea:
Now arm in arm, now parted, they behold
The glitt'ring waters on the shingles roll'd:
The timid girls, half dreading their design,
Dip the small foot in the retarded brine,
And search for crimson weeds, which spreading flow,
Or lie like pictures on the sand below:
With all those bright red pebbles, that the sun
Through the small waves so softly shines upon;
And those live lucid jellies which the eye
Delights to trace as they swim glittering by:

Pearl-shells and rubied star-fish they admire,
And will arrange above the parlour-fire,—
Tokens of bliss!—"Oh! horrible! a wave
"Roars as it rises—save me, Edward! save!"
She cries:—Alas! the watchman on his way
Calls, and lets in—truth, terror, and the day!

THE SCHOLAR'S LIFE *

AT College place a youth, who means to raise
His state by merit and his name by praise;
Still much he hazards; there is serious strife
In the contentions of a scholar's life:
Not all the mind's attention, care, distress,
Nor diligence itself, ensure success:
His jealous heart a rival's powers may dread,
Till its strong feelings have confused his head,
And, after days and months, nay, years of pain,
He finds just lost the object he would gain.

But grant him this and all such life can give,
For other prospects he begins to live;
Begins to feel that man was form'd to look
And long for other objects than a book:
In his mind's eye his house and glebe he sees,
And farms and talks with farmers at his ease;
And time is lost, till fortune sends him forth
To a rude world unconscious of his worth;
There in some petty parish to reside,
The college-boast, then turn'd the village-guide;
And though awhile his flock and dairy please,
He soon reverts to former joys and ease,

* Part of the portion of "The Borough" called "Schools."

Glad when a friend shall come to break his rest,
And speak of all the pleasures they possess'd,
Of masters, fellows, tutors, all with whom
They shared those pleasures, never more to come;
Till both conceive the times by bliss endear'd,
Which once so dismal and so dull appear'd.

But fix our Scholar, and suppose him crown'd
With all the glory gain'd on classic ground;
Suppose the world without a sigh resign'd,
And to his college all his care confined;
Give him all honours that such states allow,
The freshman's terror and the tradesman's bow;
Let his apartments with his taste agree,
And all his views be those he loves to see;
Let him each day behold the savoury treat,
For which he pays not, but is paid to eat;
These joys and glories soon delight no more,
Although, withheld, the mind is vex'd and sore;
The honour too is to the place confined,
Abroad they know not each superior mind:
Strangers no *wranglers* in these figures see,
Nor give they worship to a high degree;
Unlike the prophet's is the scholar's case,
His honour all is in his dwelling-place:
And there such honours are familiar things;
What is a monarch in a crowd of kings?
Like other sovereigns he's by forms address'd,
By statutes govern'd and with rules oppress'd.

When all these forms and duties die away,
And the day passes like the former day,

Then of exterior things at once bereft,
He's to himself and one attendant left;
Nay, John too goes; * nor aught of service more
Remains for him; he gladly quits the door,
And, as he whistles to the college-gate,
He kindly pities his poor master's fate.

"But then from Study will no comforts rise?"—
Yes! such as studious minds alone can prize;
Comforts, yea!—joys ineffable they find,
Who seek the prouder pleasures of the mind:
The soul, collected in those happy hours,
Then makes her efforts, then enjoys her powers;
And in those seasons feels herself repaid
For labours past and honours long delay'd.

No! 'tis not worldly gain, although by chance
The sons of learning may to wealth advance;
Nor station high, though in some favouring hour
The sons of learning may arrive at power;
Nor is it glory, though the public voice
Of honest praise will make the heart rejoice:
But 'tis the mind's own feelings give the joy,
Pleasures she gathers in her own employ.

For this the Poet looks the world around,
Where form and life and reasoning man are found:
He loves the mind, in all its modes, to trace,
And all the manners of the changing race;

* The sensation of loneliness felt by a fellow of a college, when his servant left him for the night, was very feelingly described to Mr. Crabbe by the late Mr. Lambert, one of the senior fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge, and made a strong impression on the poet's mind.—(*Note to edition of* 1834.)

Silent he walks the road of life along,
And views the aims of its tumultuous throng:
He finds what shapes the Proteus-passions take,
And what strange waste of life and joy they make,
And loves to show them in their varied ways,
With honest blame or with unflattering praise:
'Tis good to know, 'tis pleasant to impart,
These turns and movements of the human heart:
The stronger features of the soul to paint,
And make distinct the latent and the faint;
MAN AS HE IS, to place in all men's view,
Yet none with rancour, none with scorn pursue:
Nor be it ever of my Portraits told—
"Here the strong lines of malice we behold."

THE CHILD'S EXCURSION

SWEET was the morning's breath, the inland tide,
And our boat gliding, where alone could glide
Small craft—and they oft touch'd on either side.
It was my first-born joy. I heard them say,
"Let the child go; he will enjoy the day."
For children ever feel delighted when
They take their portion, and enjoy with men.
Give him the pastime that the old partake,
And he will quickly top and taw forsake.

The linnet chirp'd upon the furze as well,
To my young sense, as sings the nightingale.
Without was paradise—because within
Was a keen relish, without taint of sin.

A town appear'd,—and where an infant went,
Could they determine, on themselves intent?
I lost my way, and my companions me,
And all, their comforts and tranquillity.
Mid-day it was, and, as the sun declined,
The good, found early, I no more could find:
The men drank much, to whet the appetite;
And, growing heavy, drank to make them light;
Then drank to relish joy, then further to excite.

ORFORD.

Their cheerfulness did but a moment last;
Something fell short, or something overpast.
The lads play'd idly with the helm and oar,
And nervous women would be set on shore,
Till "civil dudgeon" grew, and peace would smile no more.

Now on the colder water faintly shone
The sloping light—the cheerful day was gone;
Frown'd every cloud, and from the gather'd frown
The thunder burst, and rain came pattering down.
Now, all the freshness of the morning fled,
My spirits burden'd, and my heart was dead;
And when, at length, the dreaded storm went past,
And there was peace and quietness at last,
'Twas not the morning's quiet—it was not
Pleasure revived, but Misery forgot:
It was not Joy that now commenced her reign,
But mere relief from wretchedness and Pain.

So many a day, in life's advance, I knew;
So they commenced, and so they ended too.
The promised joy, that like this morning rose,
Broke on my view, then clouded at its close;
E'en Love himself, that promiser of bliss,
Made his best days of pleasure end like this:
He mix'd his bitters in the cup of joy,
Nor gave a bliss uninjured by alloy.

THE PARISH-CLERK

WITH our late Vicar, and his age the same,
His clerk, hight *Jachin,* to his office came;
The like slow speech was his, the like tall slender frame:
But Jachin was the gravest man on ground,
And heard his master's jokes with look profound;
For worldly wealth this man of letters sigh'd,
And had a sprinkling of the spirit's pride:
But he was sober, chaste, devout, and just,
One whom his neighbours could believe and trust:
Of none suspected, neither man nor maid
By him were wrong'd, or were of him afraid.

There was indeed a frown, a trick of state
In Jachin;—formal was his air and gait:
But if he seem'd more solemn and less kind,
Than some light men to light affairs confined,
Still 'twas allow'd that he should so behave
As in high seat, and be severely grave.
This book-taught man, to man's first foe profess'd
Defiance stern, and hate that knew not rest;
He held that Satan, since the world began,
In every act, had strife with every man;
That never evil deed on earth was done,
But of the acting parties he was one;

The flattering guide to make ill prospects clear;
To smooth rough ways the constant pioneer;
The ever-tempting, soothing, softening power,
Ready to cheat, seduce, deceive, devour.

"Me has the sly Seducer oft withstood,"
Said pious Jachin,—"but he gets no good;
"I pass the house where swings the tempting sign,
"And pointing, tell him, 'Satan, that is thine:'
"I pass the damsels pacing down the street,
"And look more grave and solemn when we meet;
"Nor doth it irk me to rebuke their smiles,
"Their wanton ambling and their watchful wiles.
"At feasts and banquets seldom am I found,
"And (save at church) abhor a tuneful sound;
"To plays and shows I run not to and fro,
"And where my master goes, forbear to go."
No wonder Satan took the thing amiss,
To be opposed by such a man as this—
A man so grave, important, cautious, wise,
Who dared not trust his feeling or his eyes;
No wonder he should lurk and lie in wait,
Should fit his hooks and ponder on his bait,
Should on his movements keep a watchful eye;
For he pursued a fish who led the fry.

With his own peace our Clerk was not content,
He tried, good man! to make his friends repent.
"Nay, nay, my friends, from inns and taverns fly;
"You may suppress your thirst, but not supply:
"A foolish proverb says, 'The devil's at home;'
"But he is there, and tempts in every room:

"Men feel, they know not why, such places please;
"His are the spells—they're idleness and ease;
"Magic of fatal kind he throws around,
"Where care is banish'd, but the heart is bound.
"Think not of Beauty;—when a maid you meet,
"Turn from her view and step across the street;
"Dread all the sex: their looks create a charm,
"A smile should fright you and a word alarm.
"Go not with crowds when they to pleasure run,
"But public joy in private safety shun:
"When bells, diverted from their true intent,
"Ring loud for some deluded mortal sent
"To hear or make long speech in parliament."

Our worthy Clerk had now arrived at fame,
Such as but few in his degree might claim;
But he was poor, and wanted not the sense
That lowly rates the praise without the pence:
He saw the common herd with reverence treat
The weakest burgess whom they chanced to meet;
While few respected his exalted views,
And all beheld his doublet and his shoes:
None, when they meet, would to his parts allow
(Save his poor boys) a hearing or a bow:
To this false judgment of the vulgar mind,
He was not fully, as a saint, resign'd;
He found it much his jealous soul affect,
To fear derision and to find neglect.

The year was bad, the christening-fees were small,
The weddings few, the parties paupers all:

Wealth was in all his thoughts, his views, his dreams,
And prompted base desires and baseless schemes.
Once in a month the sacramental bread
Our Clerk with wine upon the table spread:
The custom this, that, as the vicar reads,
He for our off'rings round the church proceeds:
Tall spacious seats the wealthier people hid,
And none had view of what his neighbour did:
Laid on the box and mingled when they fell,
Who should the worth of each oblation tell?
Now as poor Jachin took the usual round,
And saw the alms and heard the metal sound,
He had a thought—at first it was no more
Than—"These have cash and give it to the poor."
A second thought from this to work began—
"And can they give it to a poorer man?"
Proceeding thus,—"My merit could they know,
"And knew my need, how freely they'd bestow;
"But though they know not, these remain the same,
"And are a strong, although a secret claim:
"To me, alas! the want and worth are known,
"Why then, in fact, 'tis but to take my own."

Thought after thought pour'd in, a tempting train,
"Suppose it done,—who is it could complain?
"How could the poor? for they such trifles share,
"As add no comfort, as suppress no care;
"But many a pittance makes a worthy heap,—
"What says the law? that silence puts to sleep:—
"Nought then forbids, the danger could we shun,
"And sure the business may be safely done.

"But am I earnest?—earnest? No.—I say,
"If such my mind, that I could plan a way;
"Let me reflect;—I've not allow'd me time
"To purse the pieces, and if dropp'd they'd chime:"
Fertile is evil in the soul of man,—
He paused,—said Jachin, "They may drop on bran.
"Why then 'tis safe and (all consider'd) just,
"The poor receive it,—'tis no breach of trust:
"The old and widows may their trifles miss,
"There must be evil in a good like this:
"But I'll be kind—the sick I'll visit twice,
"When now but once, and freely give advice.
"Yet let me think again:"—Again he tried
For stronger reasons on his passion's side,
And quickly these were found, yet slowly he complied.

The morning came: the common service done,
Shut every door,—the solemn rite begun,—
O'er the tall pew he held the box, and heard
The offer'd piece, rejoicing as he fear'd:
Just by the pillar, as he cautious tripp'd,
And turn'd the aisle, he then a portion slipp'd
From the full store, and to the pocket sent,
But held a moment—and then down it went.
The priest read on, on walk'd the man afraid,
Till a gold offering in the plate was laid;
Trembling he took it, for a moment stopp'd,
Then down it fell, and sounded as it dropp'd;
Amazed he started, for th' affrighted man,
Lost and bewilder'd, thought not of the bran.
But all were silent, all on things intent
Of high concern, none ear to money lent:

So on he walk'd, more cautious than before,
And gain'd the purposed sum and one piece more.
"Practice makes perfect:" when the month came round,
He dropp'd the cash, nor listen'd for a sound;
But yet, when last of all th' assembled flock
He ate and drank,—it gave th' electric shock:
Oft was he forced his reasons to repeat,
Ere he could kneel in quiet at his seat;
But custom soothed him—ere a single year
All this was done without restraint or fear:
Cool and collected, easy and composed,
He was correct till all the service closed;
Then to his home, without a groan or sigh,
Gravely he went, and laid his treasure by.
Want will complain: some widows had express'd
A doubt if they were favour'd like the rest;
The rest described with like regret their dole,
And thus from parts they reason'd to the whole:
When all agreed some evil must be done,
Or rich men's hearts grew harder than a stone.
Our easy vicar cut the matter short;
He would not listen to such vile report.
All were not thus—there govern'd in that year
A stern stout churl, an angry overseer;
A tyrant fond of power, loud, lewd, and most severe:
Him the mild vicar, him the graver clerk,
Advised, reproved, but nothing would he mark,
Save the disgrace, "and that, my friends," said he,
"Will I avenge, whenever time may be."
And now, alas! 'twas time;—from man to man
Doubt and alarm and shrewd suspicions ran.

With angry spirit and with sly intent,
This parish-ruler to the altar went;
A private mark he fix'd on shillings three,
And but one mark could in the money see;
Besides, in peering round, he chanced to note
A sprinkling slight on Jachin's Sunday-coat:
All doubt was over:—when the flock were bless'd,
In wrath he rose, and thus his mind express'd.

"Foul deeds are here!" and saying this, he took
The Clerk, whose conscience, in her cold-fit, shook:
His pocket then was emptied on the place;
All saw his guilt; all witness'd his disgrace:
He fell, he fainted, not a groan, a look,
Escaped the culprit; 'twas a final stroke.

. . . . . .

He lived in freedom, but he hourly saw
How much more fatal justice is than law;
He saw another in his office reign,
And his mild master treat him with disdain:
He saw that all men shunn'd him, some reviled,
The harsh pass'd frowning, and the simple smiled.

In each lone place, dejected and dismay'd,
Shrinking from view, his wasting form he laid;
Or to the restless sea and roaring wind
Gave the strong yearnings of a ruin'd mind:
On the broad beach, the silent summer-day,
Stretch'd on some wreck, he wore his life away;
Or where the river mingles with the sea,
Or on the mud-bank by the elder tree,
Or by the bounding marsh-dyke, there was he;

And when unable to forsake the town,
In the blind courts he sate desponding down—
Always alone; then feebly would he crawl
The church-way walk, and lean upon the wall:
Too ill for this, he lay beside the door,
Compell'd to hear the reasoning of the poor:
He look'd so pale, so weak, the pitying crowd
Their firm belief of his repentance vow'd;
They saw him then so ghastly and so thin,
That they exclaim'd, "Is this the work of sin?"
"Yes," in his better moments, he replied,
"Of sinful avarice and the spirit's pride;—
"While yet untempted, I was safe and well;
"Temptation came; I reason'd, and I fell:
"To be man's guide and glory I design'd
"A rare example for our sinful kind;
"But now my weakness and my guilt I see,
"And am a warning—man, be warn'd by me!"

He said, and saw no more the human face;
To a lone loft he went, his dying place,
And, as the vicar of his state inquired,
Turn'd to the wall and silently expired!

THE PARTING HOUR*

MINUTELY trace man's life; year after year,
Through all his days let all his deeds appear,
And then, though some may in that life be strange,
Yet there appears no vast nor sudden change:
The links that bind those various deeds are seen,
And no mysterious void is left between.

But let these binding links be all destroy'd,
All that through years he suffer'd or enjoy'd:
Let that vast gap be made, and then behold—
This was the youth, and he is thus when old;
Then we at once the work of time survey,
And in an instant see a life's decay;
Pain mix'd with pity in our bosoms rise,
And sorrow takes new sadness from surprise.

Beneath yon tree, observe an ancient pair—
A sleeping man; a woman in her chair,
Watching his looks with kind and pensive air;
Nor wife, nor sister she, nor is the name
Nor kindred of this friendly pair the same;
Yet so allied are they, that few can feel
Her constant, warm, unwearied, anxious zeal;

* NOTE B.—The Parting Hour.

Their years and woes, although they long have loved,
Keep their good name and conduct unreproved;
Thus life's small comforts they together share,
And while life lingers for the grave prepare.

No other subjects on their spirits press,
Nor gain such int'rest as the past distress;
Grievous events, that from the mem'ry drive
Life's common cares, and those alone survive,
Mix with each thought, in every action share,
Darken each dream, and blend with every prayer.

To *David Booth*, his fourth and last-born boy,
Allen his name, was more than common joy;
And as the child grew up, there seem'd in him,
A more than common life in every limb;
A strong and handsome stripling he became,
And the gay spirit answer'd to the frame;
A lighter, happier lad was never seen,
For ever easy, cheerful, or serene;
His early love he fix'd upon a fair
And gentle maid—they were a handsome pair.

They at an infant-school together play'd,
Where the foundation of their love was laid:
The boyish champion would his choice attend
In every sport, in every fray defend.
As prospects open'd, and as life advanced,
They walk'd together, they together danced;
On all occasions, from their early years,
They mix'd their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears;
Each heart was anxious, till it could impart
Its daily feelings to its kindred heart;

As years increased, unnumber'd petty wars
Broke out between them; jealousies and jars;
Causeless indeed, and follow'd by a peace,
That gave to love—growth, vigour, and increase.
Whilst yet a boy, when other minds are void,
Domestic thoughts young Allen's hours employ'd;
Judith in gaining hearts had no concern,
Rather intent the matron's part to learn;
Thus early prudent and sedate they grew,
While lovers, thoughtful—and, though children, true.
To either parents not a day appear'd,
When with this love they might have interfered:
Childish at first, they cared not to restrain;
And strong at last, they saw restriction vain;
Nor knew they when that passion to reprove—
Now idle fondness, now resistless love.

So while the waters rise, the children tread
On the broad estuary's sandy bed;
But soon the channel fills, from side to side
Comes danger rolling with the deep'ning tide;
Yet none who saw the rapid current flow
Could the first instant of that danger know.

The lovers waited till the time should come
When they together could possess a home:
In either house were men and maids unwed,
Hopes to be soothed, and tempers to be led.
Then Allen's mother of his favourite maid
Spoke from the feelings of a mind afraid:
"Dress and amusements were her sole employ,"
She said—"entangling her deluded boy;"

And yet, in truth, a mother's jealous love
Had much imagined and could little prove;
Judith had beauty—and if vain, was kind,
Discreet and mild, and had a serious mind.

Dull was their prospect—when the lovers met,
They said, "We must not—dare not venture yet."
"Oh! could I labour for thee," Allen cried,
"Why should our friends be thus dissatisfied?
"On my own arm I could depend, but they
"Still urge obedience—must I yet obey?"
Poor Judith felt the grief, but grieving begg'd delay.

At length a prospect came that seem'd to smile,
And faintly woo them, from a Western Isle;
A kinsman there a widow's hand had gain'd,
"Was old, was rich, and childless yet remain'd;
"Would some young Booth to his affairs attend,
"And wait awhile, he might expect a friend."
The elder brothers, who were not in love,
Fear'd the false seas, unwilling to remove;
But the young Allen, an enamour'd boy,
Eager an independence to enjoy,
Would through all perils seek it,—by the sea,—
Through labour, danger, pain, or slavery.
The faithful Judith his design approved,
For both were sanguine, they were young, and loved.
The mother's slow consent was then obtain'd;
The time arrived, to part alone remain'd:
All things prepared, on the expected day
Was seen the vessel anchor'd in the bay.

From her would seamen in the evening come,
To take th' adventurous Allen from his home;
With his own friends the final day he pass'd,
And every painful hour, except the last.
The grieving father urged the cheerful glass,
To make the moments with less sorrow pass;
Intent the mother look'd upon her son,
And wish'd th' assent withdrawn, the deed undone;
The younger sister, as he took his way,
Hung on his coat, and begg'd for more delay:
But his own Judith call'd him to the shore,
Whom he must meet, for they might meet no more;—
And there he found her—faithful, mournful, true,
Weeping, and waiting for a last adieu!
The ebbing tide had left the sand, and there
Moved with slow steps the melancholy pair:
Sweet were the painful moments—but, how sweet,
And without pain, when they again should meet!
Now either spoke, as hope and fear impress'd,
Each their alternate triumph in the breast.

Distance alarm'd the maid—she cried, "'Tis far!"
And danger too—"it is a time of war:
"Then in those countries are diseases strange,
"And women gay, and men are prone to change:
"What then may happen in a year, when things
"Of vast importance every moment brings!
"But hark! an oar!" she cried, yet none appear'd—
'Twas love's mistake, who fancied what it fear'd;
And she continued—"Do, my Allen, keep
"Thy heart from evil, let thy passions sleep;

"Believe it good, nay glorious to prevail,
"And stand in safety where so many fail;
"And do not, Allen, or for shame, or pride,
"Thy faith abjure, or thy profession hide;
"Can I believe *his* love will lasting prove,
"Who has no rev'rence for the God I love?
"I know thee well! how good thou art and kind;
"But strong the passions that invade thy mind—
"Now, what to me hath Allen to commend?"—
"Upon my mother," said the youth, "attend;
"Forget her spleen, and, in my place appear,
"Her love to me will make my Judith dear,
"Oft I shall think (such comforts lovers seek),
"Who speaks of me, and fancy what they speak;
"Then write on all occasions, always dwell
"On hope's fair prospects, and be kind and well,
"And ever choose the fondest, tenderest style.'
She answer'd, "No," but answer'd with a smile.
"And now, my Judith, at so sad a time,
"Forgive my fear, and call it not my crime;
"When with our youthful neighbours 'tis thy
chance
"To meet in walks, the visit or the dance,
"When every lad would on my lass attend,
"Choose not a smooth designer for a friend:
"That fawning Philip!—nay, be not severe,
"A rival's hope must cause a lover's fear."

Displeased she felt, and might in her reply
Have mix'd some anger, but the boat was nigh,
Now truly heard!—it soon was full in sight;—
Now the sad farewell, and the long good-night;

For see !—his friends come hast'ning to the beach,
And now the gunwale is within the reach :
" Adieu !—farewell !—remember !"—and what more
Affection taught, was utter'd from the shore.
But Judith left them with a heavy heart,
Took a last view, and went to weep apart.
And now his friends went slowly from the place,
Where she stood still, the dashing oar to trace,
Till all were silent !—for the youth she pray'd,
And softly then return'd the weeping maid.

They parted, thus by hope and fortune led,
And Judith's hours in pensive pleasure fled ;
But when return'd the youth ? — the youth no more
Return'd exulting to his native shore ;
But forty years were past, and then there came
A worn-out man with wither'd limbs and lame,
His mind oppress'd with woes, and bent with age his frame :
Yes ! old and grieved, and trembling with decay,
Was Allen landing in his native bay,
Willing his breathless form should blend with kindred clay.
In an autumnal eve he left the beach,
In such an eve he chanced the port to reach :
He was alone ; he press'd the very place
Of the sad parting, of the last embrace :
There stood his parents, there retired the maid,
So fond, so tender, and so much afraid ;
And on that spot, through many a year, his mind
Turn'd mournful back, half sinking, half resign'd.

No one was present; of its crew bereft,
A single boat was in the billows left;
Sent from some anchor'd vessel in the bay,
At the returning tide to sail away:
O'er the black stern the moonlight softly play'd,
The loosen'd foresail flapping in the shade;
All silent else on shore; but from the town
A drowsy peal of distant bells came down:
From the tall houses here and there, a light
Served some confused remembrance to excite:
"There," he observed, and new emotions felt,
"Was my first home—and yonder Judith dwelt;
"Dead! dead are all! I long—I fear to know,"
He said, and walk'd impatient, and yet slow.

Sudden there broke upon his grief a noise
Of merry tumult and of vulgar joys:
Seamen returning to their ship, were come,
With idle numbers straying from their home;
Allen among them mix'd, and in the old
Strove some familiar features to behold;
While fancy aided memory:—"Man! what cheer?"
A sailor cried; "Art thou at anchor here?"
Faintly he answer'd, and then tried to trace
Some youthful features in some aged face:
A swarthy matron he beheld, and thought
She might unfold the very truths he sought:
Confused and trembling, he the dame address'd:
"The *Booths!* yet live they?" pausing and oppress'd;
Then spake again:—"Is there no ancient man,
"David his name?—assist me, if you can.—

"Flemmings there were — and Judith, doth she
live?"
The woman gazed, nor could an answer give;
Yet wond'ring stood, and all were silent by,
Feeling a strange and solemn sympathy.
The woman musing said—"She knew full well
"Where the old people came at last to dwell;
"They had a married daughter, and a son,
"But they were dead, and now remain'd not one."

"Yes," said an elder, who had paused intent
On days long past, "there was a sad event;
"One of these Booths—it was my mother's tale—
"Here left his lass, I know not where to sail:
"She saw their parting, and observed the pain;
"But never came th' unhappy man again:"
"The ship was captured"—Allen meekly said,
"And what became of the forsaken maid?"
The woman answer'd: "I remember now,
"She used to tell the lasses of her vow,
"And of her lover's loss, and I have seen
"The gayest hearts grow sad where she has been;
"Yet in her grief she married, and was made
"Slave to a wretch, whom meekly she obey'd,
"And early buried—but I know no more:
"And hark! our friends are hast'ning to the
shore."

Allen soon found a lodging in the town,
And walk'd, a man unnoticed up and down.
This house, and this, he knew, and thought a face
He sometimes could among a number trace:

Of names remember'd there remain'd a few,
But of no favourites, and the rest were new:
A merchant's wealth, when Allen went to sea,
Was reckon'd boundless.—Could he living be?
Or lived his son? for one he had, the heir
To a vast business, and a fortune fair.
No! but that heir's poor widow, from her shed,
With crutches went to take her dole of bread:
There was a friend whom he had left a boy,
With hope to sail the master of a hoy;
Him, after many a stormy day, he found
With his great wish, his life's whole purpose, crown'd.
This hoy's proud captain look'd in Allen's face,—
"Yours is, my friend," said he, "a woeful case;
"We cannot all succeed: I now command
"The *Betsy* sloop, and am not much at land;
"But when we meet, you shall your story tell
"Of foreign parts—I bid you now farewell!"

Allen so long had left his native shore,
He saw but few whom he had seen before;
The older people, as they met him, cast
A pitying look, oft speaking as they pass'd—
"The man is Allen Booth, and it appears
"He dwelt among us in his early years:
"We see the name engraved upon the stones,
"Where this poor wanderer means to lay his bones."
Thus where he lived and loved—unhappy change!—
He seems a stranger, and finds all are strange.

But now a Widow, in a village near,
Chanced of the melancholy man to hear;

Old as she was, to Judith's bosom came
Some strong emotions at the well-known name;
He was her much-loved Allen, she had stay'd
Ten troubled years, a sad afflicted maid;
Then was she wedded, of his death assured,
And much of mis'ry in her lot endured;
Her husband died; her children sought their bread
In various places, and to her were dead.
The once fond lovers met; nor grief nor age,
Sickness or pain, their hearts could disengage:
Each had immediate confidence; a friend
Both now beheld, on whom they might depend:
"Now is there one to whom I can express
"My nature's weakness, and my soul's distress."
Allen look'd up, and with impatient heart—
"Let me not lose thee—never let us part:
"So Heaven this comfort to my sufferings give,
"It is not all distress to think and live."
Thus Allen spoke—for time had not removed
The charms attach'd to one so fondly loved;
Who with more health, the mistress of their cot,
Labours to soothe the evils of his lot.
To her, to her alone, his various fate,
At various times, 'tis comfort to relate;
And yet his sorrow—she too loves to hear
What wrings her bosom, and compels the tear.

First he related how he left the shore,
Alarm'd with fears that they should meet no more:
Then, ere the ship had reach'd her purposed course,
They met and yielded to the Spanish force;

Then 'cross th' Atlantic seas they bore their prey,
Who grieving landed from their sultry bay ;
And marching many a burning league, he found
Himself a slave upon a miner's ground :
There a good priest his native language spoke,
And gave some ease to his tormenting yoke ;
Kindly advanced him in his master's grace,
And he was station'd in an easier place :
There, hopeless ever to escape the land,
He to a Spanish maiden gave his hand ;
In cottage shelter'd from the blaze of day,
He saw his happy infants round him play ;
Where summer shadows, made by lofty trees,
Waved o'er his seat, and soothed his reveries ;
E'en then he thought of England, nor could sigh,
But his fond Isabel demanded, "Why?"
Grieved by the story, she the sigh repaid,
And wept in pity for the English maid :
Thus twenty years were pass'd, and pass'd his views
Of further bliss, for he had wealth to lose :
His friend now dead, some foe had dared to paint
"His faith as tainted : he his spouse would taint ;
"Make all his children infidels, and found
"An English heresy on Christian ground."

"Whilst I was poor," said Allen, "none would care
"What my poor notions of religion were ;
"None ask'd me whom I worshipp'd, how I pray'd,
"If due obedience to the laws were paid :
"My good adviser taught me to be still,
"Nor to make converts had I power or will.

"I preach'd no foreign doctrine to my wife,
"And never mention'd Luther in my life;
"I, all they said, say what they would, allow'd,
"And when the fathers bade me bow, I bow'd;
"Their forms I follow'd, whether well or sick,
"And was a most obedient Catholic.
"But I had money, and these pastors found
"My notions vague, heretical, unsound:
"A wicked book they seized; the very Turk
"Could not have read a more pernicious work;
"To me pernicious, who if it were good
"Or evil question'd not, nor understood:
"Oh! had I little but the book possess'd,
"I might have read it, and enjoy'd my rest."

Alas! poor Allen—through his wealth was seen
Crimes that by poverty conceal'd had been:
Faults that in dusty pictures rest unknown
Are in an instant through the varnish shown.

He told their cruel mercy; how at last,
In Christian kindness for the merits past,
They spared his forfeit life, but bade him fly,
Or for his crime and contumacy die;
Fly from all scenes, all objects of delight:
His wife, his children, weeping in his sight,
All urging him to flee, he fled, and cursed his flight.

He next related how he found a way,
Guideless and grieving, to Campeachy Bay:
There in the woods he wrought, and there, among
Some lab'ring seamen, heard his native tongue:

The sound, one moment, broke upon his pain
With joyful force; he long'd to hear again:
Again he heard; he seized an offer'd hand,
"And when beheld you last our native land!"
He cried, "and in what country? quickly say"—
The seamen answer'd—strangers all were they;
One only at his native port had been;
He, landing once, the quay and church had seen,
For that esteem'd; but nothing more he knew.
Still more to know, would Allen join the crew,
Sail where they sail'd, and, many a peril past,
They at his kinsman's isle their anchor cast;
But him they found not, nor could one relate
Aught of his will, his wish, or his estate.
This grieved not Allen; then again he sail'd
For England's coast, again his fate prevail'd:
War raged, and he, an active man and strong,
Was soon impress'd, and served his country long.
By various shores he pass'd, on various seas,
Never so happy as when void of ease.—
And then he told how in a calm distress'd,
Day after day his soul was sick of rest;
When, as a log upon the deep they stood,
Then roved his spirit to the inland wood;
Till, while awake, he dream'd, that on the seas
Were his loved home, the hill, the stream, the trees:
He gazed, he pointed to the scenes:—"There stand
"My wife, my children, 'tis my lovely land;
"See! there my dwelling—oh! delicious scene
"Of my best life—unhand me—are ye men?"
And thus the frenzy ruled him, till the wind
Brush'd the fond pictures from the stagnant mind.

He told of bloody fights, and how at length
The rage of battle gave his spirits strength:
'Twas in the Indian seas his limb he lost,
And he was left half-dead upon the coast;
But living gain'd, 'mid rich aspiring men,
A fair subsistence by his ready pen.
"Thus," he continued, "pass'd unvaried years,
"Without events producing hopes or fears."
Then ofttimes in delightful dream he flew
To England's shore, and scenes his childhood knew:
Anxious he felt on English earth to lie;
To view his native soil, and there to die.
He then described the gloom, the dread he found,
When first he landed on the chosen ground,
Where undefined was all he hoped and fear'd,
And how confused and troubled all appear'd;
His thoughts in past and present scenes employ'd,
All views in future blighted and destroy'd;
His were a medley of bewild'ring themes,
Sad as realities, and wild as dreams.

Here his relation closes, but his mind
Flies back again some resting-place to find;
Thus silent, musing through the day, he sees
His children sporting by those lofty trees,
Their mother singing in the shady scene,
Where the fresh springs burst o'er the lively green;—
So strong his eager fancy, he affrights
The faithful widow by its powerful flights;
For what disturbs him he aloud will tell,
And cry—"'Tis she, my wife! my Isabel!

"Where are my children?"—Judith grieves to hear
How the soul works in sorrow so severe;
Assiduous all his wishes to attend,
Deprived of much, he yet may boast a friend;
Watch'd by her care, in sleep, his spirit takes
Its flight, and watchful finds her when he wakes.

'Tis now her office; her attention see!
While her friend sleeps beneath that shading tree,
Careful, she guards him from the glowing heat,
And pensive muses at her Allen's feet.

And where is he? Ah! doubtless in those scenes
Of his best days, amid the vivid greens,
Fresh with unnumber'd rills, where ev'ry gale
Breathes the rich fragrance of the neighb'ring vale;
Smiles not his wife, and listens as there comes
The night-bird's music from the thick'ning glooms?
And as he sits with all these treasures nigh,
Blaze not with fairy-light the phosphor-fly,
When like a sparkling gem it wheels illumined by?
This is the joy that now so plainly speaks
In the warm transient flushing of his cheeks;
For he is list'ning to the fancied noise
Of his own children, eager in their joys:
All this he feels, a dream's delusive bliss
Gives the expression, and the glow like this.
And now his Judith lays her knitting by,
These strong emotions in her friend to spy;
For she can fully of their nature deem——
But see! he breaks the long-protracted theme,
And wakes, and cries—"My God! 'twas but a dream."

THE PATRON

A BOROUGH-BAILIFF, who to law was train'd,
A wife and sons in decent state maintain'd;
He had his way in life's rough ocean steer'd,
And many a rock and coast of danger clear'd;
He saw where others fail'd, and care had he,
Others in him should not such failings see:
His sons in various busy states were placed,
And all began the sweets of gain to taste,
Save *John*, the younger, who, of sprightly parts,
Felt not a love for money-making arts:
In childhood feeble, he, for country air,
Had long resided with a rustic pair;
All round whose room were doleful ballads, songs,
Of lovers' sufferings and of ladies' wrongs;
Of peevish ghosts who came at dark midnight,
For breach of promise, guilty men to fright;
Love, marriage, murder, were the themes, with these,
All that on idle, ardent spirits seize;
Robbers at land and pirates on the main,
Enchanters foil'd, spells broken, giants slain;
Legends of love, with tales of halls and bowers,
Choice of rare songs, and garlands of choice flowers,
And all the hungry mind without a choice devours.

From village children kept apart by pride,
With such enjoyments, and without a guide,
Inspired by feelings all such works infused,
John snatch'd a pen, and wrote as he perused:
With the like fancy he could make his knight
Slay half a host, and put the rest to flight;
And with a heart yet free, no busy brain
Form'd wilder notions of delight and pain.

Such were the fruits of John's poetic toil,
Weeds, but still proofs of vigour in the soil;
He nothing purposed but with vast delight,
Let Fancy loose, and wonder'd at her flight:
His notions of poetic worth were high,
And of his own still-hoarded poetry;—
These to his father's house he bore with pride,
A miser's treasure, in his room to hide;
Till spurr'd by glory, to a reading friend
He kindly show'd the sonnets he had penn'd:
With erring judgment, though with heart sincere,
That friend exclaim'd, "These beauties must appear."
In magazines they claim'd their share of fame,
Though undistinguish'd by their author's name;
And with delight the young enthusiast found
The muse of Marcus with applauses crown'd.
This heard the father, and with some alarm;
"The boy," said he, "will neither trade nor farm;
"He for both law and physic is unfit,
"Wit he may have, but cannot live on wit:
"Let him his talents then to learning give
"Where verse is honour'd, and where poets live."

John kept his terms at college unreproved,
Took his degree, and left the life he loved;
Not yet ordain'd, his leisure he employ'd
In the light labours he so much enjoy'd;
His favourite notions and his daring views
Were cherish'd still, and he adored the Muse.

"A little time, and he should burst to light,
"And admiration of the world excite;
"And every friend, now cool and apt to blame
"His fond pursuit, would wonder at his fame."
When led by fancy, and from view retired,
He call'd before him all his heart desired;
"Fame shall be mine, then wealth shall I possess,
"And beauty next an ardent lover bless;
"For me the maid shall leave her nobler state,
"Happy to raise and share her poet's fate."
He saw each day his father's frugal board,
With simple fare by cautious prudence stored;
Where each indulgence was foreweigh'd with care,
And the grand maxims were to save and spare:
Yet in his walks, his closet, and his bed,
All frugal cares and prudent counsels fled;
And bounteous Fancy, for his glowing mind,
Wrought various scenes, and all of glorious kind.

Though rapt in visions of no vulgar kind,
To common subjects stoop'd our poet's mind;
And oft when wearied with more ardent flight,
He felt a spur satiric song to write;
A rival burgess his bold Muse attack'd,
And whipp'd severely for a well-known fact;

For while he seem'd to all demure and shy,
Our poet gazed at what was passing by;
And ev'n his father smiled when playful wit,
From his young bard, some haughty object hit.

From ancient times, the borough where they dwelt
Had mighty contest at elections felt:
Sir Godfrey Ball, 'tis true, had held in pay
Electors many for the trying day;
But in such golden chains to bind them all
Required too much for e'en Sir Godfrey Ball.
A member died, and to supply his place,
Two heroes enter'd for th' important race;
Sir Godfrey's friend and Earl Fitzdonnel's son,
Lord Frederick Damer, both prepared to run;
And partial numbers saw with vast delight
Their good young lord oppose the proud old knight.

Our poet's father, at a first request,
Gave the young lord his vote and interest;
And what he could our poet, for he stung
The foe by verse satiric, said and sung.
Lord Frederick heard of all this youthful zeal,
And felt as lords upon a canvas feel;
He read the satire, and he saw the use
That such cool insult, and such keen abuse,
Might on the wavering minds of voting men produce;
Then too his praises were in contrast seen,
"A lord as noble as the knight was mean."

"I much rejoice," he cried, "such worth to find;
"To this the world must be no longer blind:

"His glory will descend from sire to son,
"The Burns of English race, the happier Chatterton.'
Our poet's mind, now hurried and elate,
Alarm'd the anxious parent for his fate;
Who saw with sorrow, should their friend succeed,
That much discretion would the poet need.

Their friend succeeded, and repaid the zeal
The poet felt, and made opposers feel,
By praise (from lords how soothing and how sweet!)
And invitation to his noble seat.
The father ponder'd, doubtful if the brain
Of his proud boy such honour could sustain;
Pleased with the favours offer'd to a son,
But seeing dangers few so ardent shun.

Thus, when they parted, to the youthful breast
The father's fears were by his love impress'd:
"There will you find, my son, the courteous ease
"That must subdue the soul it means to please;
"That soft attention which ev'n beauty pays
"To wake our passions, or provoke our praise:
"There all the eye beholds will give delight,
"Where every sense is flatter'd like the sight:
"This is your peril; can you from such scene
"Of splendour part, and feel your mind serene,
"And in the father's humble state resume
"The frugal diet and the narrow room?"
To this the youth with cheerful heart replied,
Pleased with the trial, but as yet untried;
And while professing patience, should he fail,
He suffer'd hope o'er reason to prevail.

Impatient, by the morning mail convey'd,
The happy guest his promised visit paid;
And now arriving at the Hall, he tried
For air composed, serene and satisfied;
As he had practised in his room alone,
And there acquired a free and easy tone:
There he had said, "Whatever the degree
"A man obtains, what more than man is he?"
And when arrived—"This room is but a room;
"Can aught we see the steady soul o'ercome?
"Let me in all a manly firmness show,
"Upheld by talents, and their value know."

This reason urged; but it surpass'd his skill
To be in act as manly as in will:
When he his Lordship and the Lady saw,
Brave as he was, he felt oppress'd with awe;
And spite of verse, that so much praise had won,
The poet found he was the Bailiff's son.

But dinner came, and the succeeding hours
Fix'd his weak nerves, and raised his failing powers;
Praised and assured, he ventured once or twice
On some remark, and bravely broke the ice;
So that at night, reflecting on his words,
He found, in time, he might converse with lords.

Now was the Sister of his Patron seen—
A lovely creature, with majestic mien;
Who, softly smiling while she look'd so fair,
Praised the young poet with such friendly air;

Such winning frankness in her looks express'd,
And such attention to her brother's guest;
That so much beauty, join'd with speech so kind,
Raised strong emotions in the poet's mind;
Till reason fail'd his bosom to defend
From the sweet power of this enchanting friend.

Why has she said that in the lowest state
The noble mind ensures a noble fate?
And why thy daring mind to glory call?
That thou may'st dare and suffer, soar and fall.
Rash boy! what hope thy frantic mind invades?
What love confuses, and what pride persuades?

What say'st thou, wise one? "that all-powerful Love
"Can fortune's strong impediments remove;
"Nor is it strange that worth should wed to worth,
"The pride of genius with the pride of birth."
While thou art dreaming thus, the Beauty spies
Love in thy tremor, passion in thine eyes;
And with th' amusement pleased, of conquest vain,
She seeks her pleasure, careless of thy pain.

Thus lived our youth, with conversation, books,
And Lady Emma's soul-subduing looks;
Lost in delight, astonish'd at his lot,
All prudence banish'd, all advice forgot—
Hopes, fears, and every thought, were fix'd upon the spot.

'Twas autumn yet, and many a day must frown
On Brandon Hall, ere went my Lord to town;

Meantime the father, who had heard his boy
Lived in a round of luxury and joy,
And justly thinking that the youth was one
Who, meeting danger, was unskill'd to shun;
Knowing his temper, virtue, spirit, zeal,
How prone to hope and trust, believe and feel;
These on the parent's soul their weight impress'd,
And thus he wrote the counsels of his breast:—

"John, thou'rt a genius; thou hast some pretence,
"I think, to wit,—but hast thou sterling sense?
"That which, like gold, may through the world go
forth,
"And always pass for what 'tis truly worth;
"Whereas this genius, like a bill, must take
"Only the value our opinions make.

"Hear me, my Boy; thou hast a virtuous mind—
"But be thy virtues of the sober kind;
"Be not a Quixote, ever up in arms
"To give the guilty and the great alarms:
"If never heeded, thy attack is vain;
"And if they heed thee, they'll attack again;
"Then too in striking at that heedless rate,
"Thou in an instant may'st decide thy fate.

"Leave admonition—let the vicar give
"Rules how the nobles of his flock should live;
"Nor take that simple fancy to thy brain,
"That thou canst cure the wicked and the vain.

"Strive not too much for favour; seem at ease,
"And rather pleased thyself, than bent to please:

"Upon thy lord with decent care attend,
"But not too near; thou canst not be a friend;
"And favourite be not, 'tis a dangerous post—
"Is gain'd by labour, and by fortune lost:
"Talents like thine may make a man approved,
"But other talents trusted and beloved.
"Look round, my son, and thou wilt early see
"The kind of man thou art not form'd to be.

"The real favourites of the great are they
"Who to their views and wants attention pay,
"And pay it ever; who, with all their skill,
"Dive to the heart, and learn the secret will;
"If that be vicious, soon can they provide
"The favourite ill, and o'er the soul preside;
"For vice is weakness, and the artful know
"Their power increases as the passions grow;
"If indolent the pupil, hard their task;
"Such minds will ever for amusement ask;
"And great the labour! for a man to choose
"Objects for one whom nothing can amuse.

"These arts, indeed, my son must not pursue;
"Nor must he quarrel with the tribe that do:
"It is not safe another's crimes to know,
"Nor is it wise our proper worth to show:—
"'My lord,' you say, 'engaged me for that worth;'—
"True, and preserve it ready to come forth:
"If question'd, fairly answer,—and that done,
"Shrink back, be silent, and thy father's son;
"For they who doubt thy talents scorn thy boast,
"But they who grant them will dislike thee most:

"Observe the prudent; they in silence sit,
"Display no learning, and affect no wit;
"They hazard nothing, nothing they assume,
"But know the useful art of *acting dumb*.
"Yet to their eyes each varying look appears,
"And every word finds entrance at their ears.

"Thou art Religion's advocate—take heed,
"Hurt not the cause, thy pleasure 'tis to plead;
"With wine before thee, and with wits beside,
"Do not in strength of reasoning powers confide;
"What seems to thee convincing, certain, plain,
"They will deny, and dare thee to maintain;
"And thus will triumph o'er thy eager youth,
"While thou wilt grieve for so disgracing truth.

"With pain I've seen, these wrangling wits among,
"Faith's weak defenders, passionate and young;
"Weak thou art not, yet not enough on guard,
"Where wit and humour keep their watch and ward:
"Men gay and noisy will o'erwhelm thy sense,
"Then loudly laugh at truth's and thy expense;
"While the kind ladies will do all they can
"To check their mirth, and cry, '*The good young man!*'

"Prudence, my Boy, forbids thee to commend
"The cause or party of thy noble friend;
"What are his praises worth, who must be known
"To take a Patron's maxims for his own?
"When ladies sing, or in thy presence play,
"Do not, dear John, in rapture melt away;

"'Tis not thy part, there will be list'ners round,
"To cry '*Divine!*' and dote upon the sound;
"Remember, too, that though the poor have ears,
"They take not in the music of the spheres;
"They must not feel the warble and the thrill,
"Or be dissolved in ecstasy at will;
"Beside, 'tis freedom in a youth like thee
"To drop his awe, and deal in ecstasy!

"In silent ease, at least in silence, dine,
"Nor one opinion start of food or wine:
"Thou know'st that all the science thou can boast,
"Is of thy father's simple boil'd and roast;
"Nor always these; he sometimes saved his cash,
"By interlinear days of frugal hash:
"Wine hadst thou seldom; wilt thou be so vain
"As to decide on claret or champagne?
"Dost thou from me derive this taste sublime,
"Who order port the dozen at a time?
"When (every glass held precious in our eyes)
"We judged the value by the bottle's size:
"Then never merit for thy praise assume,
"Its worth well knows each servant in the room.

"Hard, Boy, thy task, to steer thy way among
"That servile, supple, shrewd, insidious throng;
"Who look upon thee as of doubtful race,
"An interloper, one who wants a place:
"Freedom with these, let thy free soul condemn,
"Nor with thy heart's concerns associate them.

"Of all be cautious—but be most afraid
"Of the pale charms that grace My Lady's Maid;

"Of those sweet dimples, of that fraudful eye,
"The frequent glance design'd for thee to spy;
"The soft bewitching look, the fond bewailing sigh:
"Let others frown and envy; she the while
"(Insidious syren!) will demurely smile;
"And for her gentle purpose, every day
"Inquire thy wants, and meet thee in thy way;
"She has her blandishments, and, though so weak,
"Her person pleases, and her actions speak:
"At first her folly may her aim defeat;
"But kindness shown, at length will kindness meet:
"Have some offended? them will she disdain,
"And, for thy sake, contempt and pity feign;
"She hates the vulgar, she admires to look
"On woods and groves, and dotes upon a book;
"Let her once see thee on her features dwell,
"And hear one sigh, then liberty farewell.

"But, John, remember we cannot maintain
"A poor, proud girl, extravagant and vain.

"Such are thy dangers:—yet, if thou canst steer
"Past all the perils, all the quicksands clear,
"Then may'st thou profit; but if storms prevail,
"If foes beset thee, if thy spirits fail,—
"No more of winds or waters be the sport,
"But in thy father's mansion find a port."

Our poet read.—"It is in truth," said he,
"Correct in part, but what is *this* to me?
"*I* love a foolish Abigail! in base
"And sordid office! fear not such disgrace:

"Am I so blind?" "Or thou wouldst surely see
"That lady's fall, if she should stoop to thee!"
"The cases differ." "True! for what surprise
"Could from thy marriage with the maid arise?
"But through the island would the shame be spread,
"Should the fair mistress deign with thee to wed."

John saw not this; and many a week had pass'd,
While the vain Beauty held her victim fast;
The Noble Friend still condescension show'd,
And, as before, with praises overflow'd;
But his grave Lady took a silent view
Of all that pass'd, and smiling, pitied too.

Cold grew the foggy morn, the day was brief,
Loose on the cherry hung the crimson leaf;
The dew dwelt ever on the herb; the woods
Roar'd with strong blasts, with mighty showers the floods:
All green was vanish'd, save of pine and yew,
That still displayed their melancholy hue;
Save the green holly with its berries red,
And the green moss that o'er the gravel spread.

To public views my Lord must soon attend;
And soon the Ladies—would they leave their friend?
The time was fix'd—approach'd—was near—was come;
The trying time that fill'd his soul with gloom:
Thoughtful our poet in the morning rose,
And cried, "One hour my fortune will disclose;
"Terrific hour! from thee have I to date
"Life's loftier views, or my degraded state;

"For now to be what I have been before
"Is so to fall, that I can rise no more."

The morning meal was past; and all around
The mansion rang with each discordant sound;
Haste was in every foot, and every look
The trav'ller's joy for London journey spoke:
Not so our youth; whose feelings, at the noise
Of preparation, had no touch of joys:
He pensive stood, and saw each carriage drawn,
With lackeys mounted, ready on the lawn:
The Ladies came; and John in terror threw
One painful glance, and then his eyes withdrew;
Not with such speed, but he in other eyes
With anguish read—"I pity but despise—
"Unhappy boy! presumptuous scribbler!—you,
"To dream such dreams!—be sober, and adieu!"

Then came the Noble Friend—"And will my lord
"Vouchsafe no comfort? drop no soothing word?
"Yes, he must speak:" he speaks, "My good young friend,
"You know my views; upon my care depend;
"My hearty thanks to your good father pay,
"And be a student.—Harry, drive away."

Stillness reign'd all around; of late so full
The busy scene, deserted now and dull:
Stern is his nature who forbears to feel
Gloom o'er his spirits on such trials steal;
Most keenly felt our poet as he went
From room to room without a fix'd intent;

"And here," he thought, "I was caress'd; admired
"Were here my songs; she smiled, and I aspired:
"The change how grievous!" As he mused, a dame
Busy and peevish to her duties came;
Aside the tables and the chairs she drew,
And sang and mutter'd in the poet's view:—
"This was her fortune; here they leave the poor;
"Enjoy themselves, and think of us no more;
"I had a promise—" here his pride and shame
Urged him to fly from this familiar dame;
He gave one farewell look, and by a coach
Reach'd his own mansion at the night's approach.

His father met him with an anxious air,
Heard his sad tale, and check'd what seem'd despair:
Hope was in him corrected, but alive;
My lord would something for a friend contrive;
His word was pledged: our hero's feverish mind
Admitted this, and half his grief resign'd:
But, when three months had fled, and every day
Drew from the sickening hopes their strength away,
The youth became abstracted, pensive, dull;
He utter'd nothing, though his heart was full;
Teased by inquiring words and anxious looks,
And all forgetful of his Muse and books;
Awake he mourn'd, but in his sleep perceived
A lovely vision that his pain relieved:—
His soul, transported, hail'd the happy seat,
Where once his pleasure was so pure and sweet;
Where joys departed came in blissful view,
Till reason waked, and not a joy he knew.

Questions now vex'd his spirit, most from those
Who are call'd friends, because they are not foes:
"John!" they would say; he, starting, turn'd around;
"John!" there was something shocking in the sound:
Ill brook'd he then the pert familiar phrase,
The untaught freedom, and th' inquiring gaze;
Much was his temper touch'd, his spleen provoked,
When ask'd how ladies talk'd, or walk'd, or look'd?
"What said my Lord of politics? how spent
"He there his time? and was he glad he went?"

At length a letter came, both cool and brief,
But still it gave the burthen'd heart relief:
Though not inspired by lofty hopes, the youth
Placed much reliance on Lord Frederick's truth;
Summon'd to town, he thought the visit one
Where something fair and friendly would be done;
Although he judged not, as before his fall,
When all was love and promise at the Hall.

Arrived in town, he early sought to know
The fate such dubious friendship would bestow;
At a tall building trembling he appear'd,
And his low rap was indistinctly heard;
A well-known servant came—"Awhile," said he,
"Be pleased to wait; my Lord has company."

Alone our hero sate; the news in hand,
Which though he read, he could not understand:
Cold was the day; in days so cold as these
There needs a fire, where minds and bodies freeze;
The vast and echoing room, the polish'd grate,
The crimson chairs, the sideboard with its plate;

The splendid sofa, which, though made for rest,
He then had thought it freedom to have press'd;
The shining tables, curiously inlaid,
Were all in comfortless proud style display'd;
And to the troubled feelings terror gave,
That made the once-dear friend, the sick'ning slave.

"Was he forgotten?" Thrice upon his ear
Struck the loud clock, yet no relief was near:
Each rattling carriage, and each thundering stroke
On the loud door, the dream of fancy broke;
Oft as a servant chanced the way to come,
"Brings he a message?" no! he pass'd the room:
At length 'tis certain; "Sir, you will attend
"At twelve on Thursday!" Thus the day had end.

Vex'd by these tedious hours of needless pain,
John left the noble mansion with disdain;
For there was something in that still, cold place
That seem'd to threaten and portend disgrace.

Punctual again the modest rap declared
The youth attended; then was all prepared:
For the same servant, by his lord's command,
A paper offer'd to his trembling hand:
"No more!" he cried: "disdains he to afford
"One kind expression, one consoling word?"

With troubled spirit he began to read
That "In the Church my lord could not succeed;"
Who had "to peers of either kind applied,
"And was with dignity and grace denied;

"While his own livings were by men possess'd,
"Not likely in their chancels yet to rest;
"And therefore, all things weigh'd (as he, my lord,
"Had done maturely, and he pledged his word),
"Wisdom it seem'd for John to turn his view
"To busier scenes, and bid the Church adieu!"

Here grieved the youth: he felt his father's pride
Must with his own be shock'd and mortified;
But, when he found his future comforts placed
Where he, alas! conceived himself disgraced—
In some appointment on the London quays,
He bade farewell to honour and to ease;
His spirit fell, and, from that hour assured
How vain his dreams, he suffer'd and was cured.

Our Poet hurried on, with wish to fly
From all mankind, to be conceal'd, and die.
Alas! what hopes, what high romantic views,
Did that one visit to the soul infuse,
Which, cherish'd with such love, 'twas worse than death to lose!
Still he would strive, though painful was the strife,
To walk in this appointed road of life;
On these low duties duteous he would wait,
And patient bear the anguish of his fate.
Thanks to the Patron, but of coldest kind,
Express'd the sadness of the Poet's mind;
Whose heavy hours were pass'd with busy men,
In the dull practice of th' official pen;
Who to Superiors must in time impart
(The custom this) his progress in their art:

But, so had grief on his perception wrought,
That all unheeded were the duties taught;
No answers gave he when his trial came,
Silent he stood, but suffering without shame;
And they observed that words severe or kind
Made no impression on his wounded mind:
For all perceived from whence his failure rose,
Some grief whose cause he deign'd not to disclose.
A soul averse from scenes and works so new,
Fear ever shrinking from the vulgar crew;
Distaste for each mechanic law and rule,
Thoughts of past honour and a Patron cool;
A grieving parent, and a feeling mind,
Timid and ardent, tender and refined:
These all with mighty force the youth assail'd,
Till his soul fainted, and his reason fail'd:
When this was known, and some debate arose,
How they who saw it should the fact disclose,
He found their purpose, and in terror fled
From unseen kindness, with mistaken dread.

Meantime the parent was distress'd to find
His son no longer for a priest design'd;
But still he gain'd some comfort by the news
Of John's promotion, though with humbler views:
For he conceived that in no distant time
The boy would learn to scramble and to climb;
He little thought his son, his hope and pride,
His favour'd boy, was now a home denied:
Yes! while the parent was intent to trace
How men in office climb from place to place,

By day, by night, o'er moor, and heath, and hill,
Roved the sad youth, with ever-changing will,
Of every aid bereft, exposed to every ill.

Thus as he sate, absorb'd in all the care
And all the hope that anxious fathers share,
A friend abruptly to his presence brought,
With trembling hand, the subject of his thought;
Whom he had found afflicted and subdued
By hunger, sorrow, cold, and solitude.

Silent he enter'd the forgotten room,
As ghostly forms may be conceived to come;
With sorrow-shrunken face and hair upright,
He look'd dismay, neglect, despair, affright;
But, dead to comfort, and on misery thrown,
His parent's loss he felt not, nor his own.
The friend told all he knew; and all was known,
Save the sad causes whence the ills had grown:
But, if obscure the cause, they all agreed
From rest and kindness must the cure proceed:
And he was cured; for quiet, love, and care,
Strove with the gloom, and broke on the despair:
Yet slow their progress, and, as vapours move
Dense and reluctant from the wintry grove;
All is confusion till the morning light
Gives the dim scene obscurely to the sight;
More and yet more defined the trunks appear,
Till the wild prospect stands distinct and clear;—
So the dark mind of our young poet grew
Clear and sedate; the dreadful mist withdrew;

And he resembled that bleak wintry scene,
Sad, though unclouded; dismal, though serene.

At times he utter'd, "What a dream was mine!
"And what a prospect! glorious and divine!
"Oh! in that room, and on that night to see
"These looks, that sweetness beaming all on me:
"That syren-flattery—and to send me then,
"Hope-raised and soften'd, to those heartless men;
"That dark-brow'd stern Director, pleased to show
"Knowledge of subjects, I disdain'd to know;
"Cold and controlling—but 'tis gone—'tis past;
"I had my trial, and have peace at last."

Now grew the youth resigned: he bade adieu
To all that hope, to all that fancy drew;
His frame was languid, and the hectic heat
Flush'd on his pallid face, and countless beat
The quick'ning pulse, and faint the limbs that bore
The slender form that soon would breathe no more.

Then hope of holy kind the soul sustain'd,
And not a lingering thought of earth remain'd;
Now Heaven had all, and he could smile at Love,
And the wild sallies of his youth reprove;
Then could he dwell upon the tempting days,
The proud aspiring thought, the partial praise;
Victorious now his worldly views were closed,
And on the bed of death the youth reposed.

The father grieved—but as the poet's heart
Was all unfitted for his earthly part;

As, he conceived, some other haughty fair
Would, had he lived, have led him to despair;
As, with this fear, the silent grave shut out
All feverish hope, and all tormenting doubt;
While the strong faith the pious youth possess'd,
His hope enlivening, gave his sorrows rest;
Soothed by these thoughts, he felt a mournful joy
For his aspiring and devoted boy.

Meantime the news through various channels spread,
The youth, once favour'd with such praise, was dead:
"Emma," the Lady cried, "my words attend,
"Your syren-smiles have kill'd your humble friend."

Faint was the flush of anger and of shame,
That o'er the cheek of conscious beauty came:
"You censure not," said she, "the sun's bright rays,
"When fools imprudent dare the dangerous gaze;
"And should a stripling look till he were blind,
"You would not justly call the light unkind:
"But is he dead? and am I to suppose
"The power of poison in such looks as those?"
She spoke, and, pointing to the mirror, cast
A pleased gay glance, and curtsied as she pass'd.

My Lord, to whom the poet's fate was told,
Was much affected, for a man so cold:
"Dead!" said his lordship, "run distracted, mad!
"Upon my soul I'm sorry for the lad;
"And now, no doubt, th' obliging world will say
"That my harsh usage help'd him on his way:

"What! I suppose, I should have nursed his muse,
"And with champagne have brighten'd up his views;
"Then had he made me famed my whole life long,
"And stunn'd my ears with gratitude and song.
"Still should the father hear that I regret
"Our joint misfortune—Yes! I'll not forget."—

Thus they:—The father to his grave convey'd
The son he loved, and his last duties paid.

"There lies my Boy," he cried, "of care bereft,
"And, Heav'n be praised, I've not a genius left:
"No one among ye, sons! is doomed to live
"On high-raised hopes of what the Great may give;
"None, with exalted views and fortunes mean,
"To die in anguish, or to live in spleen:
"Your pious brother soon escaped the strife
"Of such contention, but it cost his life;
"You then, my sons, upon yourselves depend,
"And in your own exertions find the friend."

THE FRANK COURTSHIP

GRAVE *Jonas Kindred*, Sybil Kindred's sire,
Was six feet high, and look'd six inches higher;
Erect, morose, determined, solemn, slow,
Who knew the man, could never cease to know;
His faithful spouse, when Jonas was not by,
Had a firm presence and a steady eye;
But with her husband dropp'd her look and tone,
And Jonas ruled unquestion'd and alone.

He read, and oft would quote the sacred words,
How pious husbands of their wives were lords;
Sarah call'd Abraham Lord! and who could be,
So Jonas thought, a greater man than he?
Himself he view'd with undisguised respect,
And never pardon'd freedom or neglect.

They had one daughter, and this favourite child
Had oft the father of his spleen beguiled;
Soothed by attention from her early years,
She gain'd all wishes by her smiles or tears:
But *Sybil* then was in that playful time,
When contradiction is not held a crime;
When parents yield their children idle praise
For faults corrected in their after days.

Peace in the sober house of Jonas dwelt,
Where each his duty and his station felt:
Yet not that peace some favour'd mortals find,
In equal views and harmony of mind;
Not the soft peace that blesses those who love,
Where all with one consent in union move;
But it was that which one superior will
Commands, by making all inferiors still;
Who bids all murmurs, all objections cease,
And with imperious voice announces—Peace!

Their meals were plenteous, regular and plain;
The trade of Jonas brought him constant gain;
Vendor of hops and malt, of coals and corn—
And, like his father, he was merchant born:
Neat was their house; each table, chair, and stool,
Stood in its place, or moving, moved by rule;
No lively print or picture graced the room;
A plain brown paper lent its decent gloom;
But here the eye, in glancing round, survey'd
A small recess that seem'd for china made;
Such pleasing pictures seem'd this pencill'd ware,
That few would search for nobler objects there—
Yet, turn'd by chosen friends, and there appear'd
His stern, strong features, whom they all revered;
For there in lofty air was seen to stand
The bold Protector of the conquer'd land;
Drawn in that look with which he wept and swore,
Turn'd out the Members, and made fast the door,
Ridding the house of every knave and drone,
Forced, though it grieved his soul, to rule alone.

The stern still smile each friend approving gave,
Then turn'd the view, and all again were grave.

They were, to wit, a remnant of that crew,
Who, as their foes maintain, their Sovereign slew;
An independent race, precise, correct,
Who ever married in the kindred sect:
Fix'd were their habits; they arose betimes,
Then pray'd their hour, and sang their party-rhymes:
Few their amusements, but when friends appear'd,
They with the world's distress their spirits cheer'd;
The nation's guilt, that would not long endure
The reign of men so modest and so pure:
Their town was large, and seldom pass'd a day
But some had fail'd, and others gone astray;
Clerks had absconded, wives eloped, girls flown
To Gretna Green, or sons rebellious grown;
Quarrels and fires arose;—and it was plain
The times were bad; the Saints had ceased to reign!
A few yet lived, to languish and to mourn
For good old manners never to return.

Jonas had sisters, and of these was one
Who lost a husband and an only son:
Twelve months her sables she in sorrow wore,
And mourn'd so long that she could mourn no more.
Distant from Jonas, and from all her race,
She now resided in a lively place;
There, by the sect unseen, at whist she play'd,
Nor was of churchmen or their church afraid:
If much of this the graver brother heard,
He something censured, but he little fear'd.

He knew her rich and frugal; for the rest,
He felt no care, or, if he felt, suppress'd:
Nor for companion when she ask'd her Niece,
Had he suspicions that disturb'd his peace;
Frugal and rich, these virtues as a charm
Preserved the thoughtful man from all alarm;
An infant yet, she soon would home return,
Nor stay the manners of the world to learn;
Meantime his boys would all his care engross,
And be his comforts if he felt the loss.

The sprightly *Sybil*, pleased and unconfin'd,
Felt the pure pleasure of the op'ning mind:
All here was gay and cheerful—all at home
Unvaried quiet and unruffled gloom:
There were no changes, and amusements few;—
Here, all was varied, wonderful, and new;
There were plain meals, plain dresses, and grave looks—
Here, gay companions and amusing books;
And the young Beauty soon began to taste
The light vocations of the scene she graced.

A man of business feels it as a crime
On calls domestic to consume his time;
Yet this grave man had not so cold a heart,
But with his daughter he was grieved to part:
And he demanded that in every year
The Aunt and Niece should at his house appear.

"Yes! we must go, my child, and by our dress
"A grave conformity of mind express;

"Must sing at meeting, and from cards refrain,
"The more t' enjoy when we return again."

Thus spake the Aunt and the discerning child
Was pleased to learn how fathers are beguiled.
Her artful part the young dissembler took,
And from the matron caught th' approving look:
When thrice the friends had met, excuse was sent
For more delay, and Jonas was content;
Till a tall maiden by her sire was seen,
In all the bloom and beauty of sixteen;
He gazed admiring;—she, with visage prim,
Glanced an arch look of gravity on him;
For she was gay at heart, but wore disguise,
And stood a vestal in her father's eyes;
Pure, pensive, simple, sad; the damsel's heart,
When Jonas praised, reproved her for the part;
For Sybil, fond of pleasure, gay and light,
Had still a secret bias to the right.

Again return'd, the Matron and the Niece
Found the late quiet gave their joy increase;
The aunt infirm, no more her visits paid,
But still with her sojourn'd the favourite maid.
Letters were sent when franks could be procured
And when they could not, silence was endured;
All were in health, and if they older grew,
It seem'd a fact that none among them knew;
The aunt and niece still led a pleasant life,
And quiet days had Jonas and his wife.

Near him a Widow dwelt of worthy fame,
Like his her manners, and her creed the same;

The wealth her husband left, her care retain'd
For one tall Youth, and widow she remained.

Sober he was and grave from early youth,
Mindful of forms, but more intent on truth;
In a light drab he uniformly dress'd,
And look serene th' unruffled mind express'd;
A hat with ample verge his brows o'erspread,
And his brown locks curl'd graceful on his head;
Yet might observers in his speaking eye
Some observation, some acuteness spy;
The friendly thought it keen, the treacherous deem'd
it sly;
Yet not a crime could foe or friend detect,
His actions all were, like his speech, correct;
And they who jested on a mind so sound,
Upon his virtues must their laughter found;
Chaste, sober, solemn, and devout they named
Him who was thus, and not of *this* ashamed.

Such were the virtues Jonas found in one
In whom he warmly wish'd to find a son:
Three years had pass'd since he had Sybil seen;
But she was doubtless what she once had been,
Lovely and mild, obedient and discreet;
The pair must love whenever they should meet;
Then ere the widow or her son should choose
Some happier maid, he would explain his views:
Now she, like him, was politic and shrewd,
With strong desire of lawful gain embued;
To all he said, she bow'd with much respect,
Pleased to comply, yet seeming to reject;

Cool and yet eager, each admired the strength
Of the opponent, and agreed at length :
As a drawn battle shows to each a force,
Powerful as his, he honours it of course ;
So in these neighbours, each the power discern'd,
And gave the praise that was to each return'd.

Jonas now ask'd his daughter—and the Aunt,
Though loth to lose her, was obliged to grant :—
But would not Sybil to the matron cling,
And fear to leave the shelter of her wing ?
No ! in the young there lives a love of change,
And to the easy, they prefer the strange !
Then, too, the joys she once pursued with zeal,
From whist and visits sprung, she ceased to feel :
When with the matrons Sybil first sat down
To cut for partners and to stake her crown,
This to the youthful maid preferment seem'd,
Who thought what woman she was then esteem'd ;
But in few years, when she perceived, indeed,
The real woman to the girl succeed,
No longer tricks and honours fill'd her mind,
But other feelings, not so well defined ;
She then reluctant grew, and thought it hard,
To sit and ponder o'er an ugly card ;
Rather the nut-tree shade the nymph preferr'd,
Pleased with the pensive gloom and evening bird ;
Thither, from company retired, she took
The silent walk, or read the fav'rite book.

The father's letter, sudden, short, and kind,
Awaked her wonder, and disturb'd her mind ;

She found new dreams upon her fancy seize,
Wild roving thoughts and endless reveries:
The parting came;—and when the Aunt perceived
The tears of Sybil, and how much she grieved—
To love for her that tender grief she laid,
That various, soft, contending passions made.

When Sybil rested in her father's arms,
His pride exulted in a daughter's charms;
A maid accomplish'd he was pleased to find,
Nor seem'd the form more lovely than the mind:
But when the fit of pride and fondness fled,
He saw his judgment by his hopes misled;
High were the lady's spirits, far more free
Her mode of speaking than a maid's should be;
Too much, as Jonas thought, she seem'd to know,
And all her knowledge was disposed to show;
"Too gay her dress, like theirs who idly dote
"On a young coxcomb, or a coxcomb's coat;
"In foolish spirits when our friends appear,
"And vainly grave when not a man is near."

Thus Jonas, adding to his sorrow blame,
And terms disdainful to a Sister's name:—
"The sinful wretch has by her arts defiled
"The ductile spirit of my darling child."

"The maid is virtuous," said the dame—Quoth he
"Let her give proof, by acting virtuously:
"Is it in gaping when the Elders pray?
"In reading nonsense half a summer's day?
"In those mock forms that she delights to trace,
"Or her loud laughs in Hezekiah's face?

"She—O Susanna!—to the world belongs;
"She loves the follies of its idle throngs,
"And reads soft tales of love, and sings love's
soft'ning songs.
"But, as our friend is yet delay'd in town,
"We must prepare her till the Youth comes down:
"You shall advise the maiden; I will threat;
"Her fears and hopes may yield us comfort yet."

Now the grave father took the lass aside,
Demanding sternly, "Wilt thou be a bride?"
She answer'd, calling up an air sedate,
"I have not vow'd against the holy state."

"No folly, Sybil," said the parent; "know
"What to their parents virtuous maidens owe:
"A worthy, wealthy youth, whom I approve,
"Must thou prepare to honour and to love.
"Formal to thee his air and dress may seem,
"But the good youth is worthy of esteem:
"Shouldst thou with rudeness treat him; of disdain
"Should he with justice or of slight complain,
"Or of one taunting speech give certain proof,
"Girl! I reject thee from my sober roof."

"My aunt," said Sybil, "will with pride protect
"One whom a father can for this reject;
"Nor shall a formal, rigid, soulless boy
"My manners alter, or my views destroy!"

Jonas then lifted up his hands on high,
And, utt'ring something 'twixt a groan and sigh,
Left the determined maid, her doubtful mother by.

"Hear me," she said; "incline thy heart, my child,
"And fix thy fancy on a man so mild:
"Thy father, Sybil, never could be moved
"By one who loved him, or by one he loved.
"Union like ours is but a bargain made
"By slave and tyrant—he will be obey'd;
"Then calls the quiet, comfort—but thy Youth
"Is mild by nature, and as frank as truth."

"But will he love?" said Sybil; "I am told
"That these mild creatures are by nature cold."

"Alas!" the matron answer'd, "much I dread
"That dangerous love by which the young are led!
"That love is earthy; you the creature prize,
"And trust your feelings and believe your eyes:
"Can eyes and feelings inward worth descry?
"No! my fair daughter, on our choice rely!
"Your love, like that display'd upon the stage,
"Indulged is folly, and opposed is rage;—
"More prudent love our sober couples show,
"All that to mortal beings, mortals owe;
"All flesh is grass—before you give a heart,
"Remember, Sybil, that in death you part;
"And should your husband die before your love,
"What needless anguish must a widow prove!
"No! my fair child, let all such visions cease;
"Yield but esteem, and only try for peace."

"I must be loved," said Sybil; "I must see
"The man in terrors who aspires to me;
"At my forbidding frown his heart must ache,
"His tongue must falter, and his frame must shake:

"And if I grant him at my feet to kneel,
"What trembling, fearful pleasure must he feel!"

"Alas for good *Josiah!*" said the dame,
"These wicked thoughts would fill his soul with shame;
"He kneel and tremble at a thing of dust!
"He cannot, child:"—the Child replied, "He must."

They ceased: the matron left her with a frown;
So Jonas met her when the Youth came down:
"Behold," said he, "thy future spouse attends:
"Receive him, daughter, as the best of friends;
"Observe, respect him—humble be each word,
"That welcomes home thy husband and thy lord."

Forewarn'd, thought Sybil, with a bitter smile,
I shall prepare my manner and my style.

Ere yet Josiah enter'd on his task,
The father met him—"Deign to wear a mask
"A few dull days, Josiah,—but a few—
"It is our duty, and the sex's due;
"I wore it once, and every grateful wife
"Repays it with obedience through her life:
"Have no regard to Sybil's dress, have none
"To her pert language, to her flippant tone;
"Henceforward thou shalt rule unquestion'd and alone;
"And she thy pleasure in thy looks shall seek—
"How she shall dress, and whether she may speak."

A sober smile return'd the Youth, and said,
"Can I cause fear, who am myself afraid?"

Sybil, meantime, sat thoughtful in her room,
And often wonder'd—"Will the creature come?
"Nothing shall tempt, shall force me to bestow
"My hand upon him,—yet I wish to know."

The door unclosed, and she beheld her sire
Lead in the youth, then hasten to retire;
"Daughter, my friend—my daughter, friend"—he cried,
And gave a meaning look, and stepp'd aside;
That look contain'd a mingled threat and prayer,
"Do take him, child—offend him, if you dare."

The couple gazed—were silent, and the maid
Look'd in his face, to make the man afraid;
The man, unmoved, upon the maiden cast
A steady view—so salutation pass'd:
But in this instant Sybil's eye had seen
The tall fair person, and the still staid mien;
The glow that temp'rance o'er the cheek had spread,
Where the soft down half veil'd the purest red;
And the serene deportment that proclaim'd
A heart unspotted, and a life unblamed:
But then with these she saw attire too plain,
The pale brown coat, though worn without a stain;
The formal air, and something of the pride
That indicates the wealth it seems to hide;
And looks that were not, she conceived, exempt
From a proud pity, or a sly contempt.

Josiah's eyes had their employment too,
Engaged and soften'd by so bright a view;
A fair and meaning face, an eye of fire,
That check'd the bold, and made the free retire:
But then with these he mark'd the studied dress
And lofty air, that scorn or pride express;
With that insidious look, that seem'd to hide
In an affected smile the scorn and pride;
And if his mind the virgin's meaning caught,
He saw a foe with treacherous purpose fraught—
Captive the heart to take, and to reject it caught.

Silent they sate—thought Sybil, that he seeks
Something, no doubt; I wonder if he speaks:
Scarcely she wonder'd, when these accents fell
Slow in her ear—"Fair maiden, art thou well?"
"Art thou physician?" she replied; "my hand,
"My pulse, at least, shall be at thy command."

She said—and saw, surprised, Josiah kneel,
And gave his lips the offer'd pulse to feel;
The rosy colour rising in her cheek,
Seem'd that surprise unmix'd with wrath to speak;
Then sternness she assumed, and—"Doctor, tell,
"Thy words cannot alarm me—am I well?"

"Thou art," said he; "and yet thy dress so light,
"I do conceive, some danger must excite:"
"In whom?" said Sybil, with a look demure:
"In more," said he, "than I expect to cure;—
"I, in thy light luxuriant robe, behold

"Want and excess, abounding and yet cold;
"Here needed, there display'd, in many a wanton fold:
"Both health and beauty, learned authors show,
"From a just medium in our clothing flow."

"Proceed, good doctor; if so great my need,
"What is thy fee? Good doctor! pray proceed."

"Large is my fee, fair lady, but I take
"None till some progress in my cure I make:
"Thou hast disease, fair maiden; thou art vain;
"Within that face sit insult and disdain;
"Thou art enamour'd of thyself; my art
"Can see the naughty malice of thy heart:
"With a strong pleasure would thy bosom move,
"Were I to own thy power, and ask thy love;
"And such thy beauty, damsel, that I might,
"But for thy pride, feel danger in thy sight,
"And lose my present peace in dreams of vain delight."

"And can thy patients," said the nymph, "endure
"Physic like this? and will it work a cure?"

"Such is my hope, fair damsel; thou, I find,
"Hast the true tokens of a noble mind;
"But the world wins thee, Sybil, and thy joys
"Are placed in trifles, fashions, follies, toys;
"Thou hast sought pleasure in the world around,
"That in thine own pure bosom should be found:

"Did all that world admire thee, praise and love,
"Could it the least of nature's pains remove?
"Could it for errors, follies, sins atone,
"Or give thee comfort, thoughtful and alone?
"It has, believe me, maid, no power to charm
"Thy soul from sorrow, or thy flesh from harm:
"Turn then, fair creature, from a world of sin,
"And seek the jewel happiness within."

"Speak'st thou at meeting?" said the nymph;
"thy speech
"Is that of mortal very prone to teach;
"But wouldst thou, doctor, from the patient learn
"Thine own disease?—The cure is thy concern."

"Yea, with good-will."—"Then know 'tis thy
complaint,
"That, for a sinner, thou'rt too much a saint;
"Hast too much show of the sedate and pure,
"And without cause art formal and demure:
"This makes a man unsocial, unpolite,
"Odious when wrong, and insolent if right.
"Thou may'st be good, but why should goodness be
"Wrapt in a garb of such formality?
"Thy person well might please a damsel's eye,
"In decent habit with a scarlet dye;
"But, jest apart—what virtue canst thou trace
"In that broad brim that hides thy sober face?
"Does that long-skirted drab, that over-nice
"And formal clothing, prove a scorn of vice?
"Then for thine accent—what in sound can be
"So void of grace as dull monotony?

"Love has a thousand varied notes to move
"The human heart: — thou may'st not speak of love,
"Till thou hast cast thy formal ways aside,
"And those becoming youth and nature tried:
"Not till exterior freedom, spirit, ease,
"Prove it thy study and delight to please;
"Not till these follies meet thy just disdain,
"While yet thy virtues and thy worth remain."

"This is severe!—Oh! maiden, wilt not thou
"Something for habits, manners, modes, allow?"—
"Yes! but allowing much, I much require,
"In my behalf, for manners, modes, attire!"

"True, lovely Sybil; and, this point agreed,
"Let me to those of greater weight proceed:
"Thy father!"—"Nay," she quickly interposed,
"Good doctor, here our conference is closed!"

Then left the Youth, who, lost in his retreat,
Pass'd the good matron on her garden-seat;
His looks were troubled, and his air, once mild
And calm, was hurried. "My audacious child!"
Exclaim'd the dame, "I read what she has done
"In thy displeasure—Ah! the thoughtless one:
"But yet, Josiah, to my stern good man
"Speak of the maid as mildly as you can:
"Can you not seem to woo a little while
"The daughter's will, the father to beguile?
"So that his wrath in time may wear away;
"Will you preserve our peace, Josiah? say."

"Yes! my good neighbour," said the gentle youth,
"Rely securely on my care and truth;
"And should thy comfort with my efforts cease;
"And only then,—perpetual is thy peace."

The dame had doubts: she well his virtues knew,
His deeds were friendly, and his words were true;
"But to address this vixen is a task
"He is ashamed to take, and I to ask."
Soon as the father from Josiah learn'd
What pass'd with Sybil, he the truth discern'd.
"He loves," the man exclaim'd, "he loves, 'tis plain,
"The thoughtless girl, and shall he love in vain?
"She may be stubborn, but she shall be tried,
"Born as she is of wilfulness and pride."

With anger fraught, but willing to persuade,
The wrathful father met the smiling maid:
"Sybil," said he, "I long, and yet I dread
"To know thy conduct—hath Josiah fled?
"And, grieved and fretted by thy scornful air,
"For his lost peace, betaken him to prayer?
"Couldst thou his pure and modest mind distress,
"By vile remarks upon his speech, address,
"Attire, and voice?"—"All this I must confess."—
"Unhappy child! what labour will it cost
"To win him back!"—"I do not think him lost."—
"Courts he then, (trifler!) insult and disdain?"—
"No: but from these he courts me to refrain?"—
"Then hear me, Sybil—should Josiah leave
"Thy father's house?"—"My father's child would
grieve:'

"That is of grace, and if he come again
"To speak of love?"—"I might from grief refrain."—
"Then wilt thou, daughter, our design embrace?"—
"Can I resist it, if it be of grace?"—
"Dear child! in three plain words thy mind express—
"Wilt thou have this good youth?"—"Dear father! yes."

THE LOVER'S JOURNEY.

THE LOVER'S JOURNEY

IT is the Soul that sees; the outward eyes
Present the object, but the Mind descries;
And thence delight, disgust, or cool indiff'rence rise;
When minds are joyful, then we look around,
And what is seen is all on fairy ground;
Again they sicken, and on every view
Cast their own dull and melancholy hue;
Or, if absorb'd by their peculiar cares,
The vacant eye on viewless matter glares,
Our feelings still upon our views attend,
And their own natures to the objects lend;
Sorrow and joy are in their influence sure,
Long as the passion reigns th' effects endure;
But Love in minds his various changes makes,
And clothes each object with the change he takes;
His light and shade on every view he throws,
And on each object, what he feels, bestows.

Fair was the morning, and the month was June,
When rose a Lover;—love awakens soon:
Brief his repose, yet much he dreamt the while
Of that day's meeting, and his *Laura's* smile;
Fancy and love that name assign'd to her,
Call'd Susan in the parish register;

And he no more was John—his Laura gave
The name *Orlando* to her faithful slave.

Bright shone the glory of the rising day,
When the fond traveller took his favourite way;
He mounted gaily, felt his bosom light,
And all he saw was pleasing in his sight.

First o'er a barren heath beside the coast
Orlando rode, and joy began to boast.

"This neat low gorse," said he, "with golden bloom,
"Delights each sense, is beauty, is perfume;
"And this gay ling, with all its purple flowers,
"A man at leisure might admire for hours;
"This green-fringed cup-moss has a scarlet tip,
"That yields to nothing but my Laura's lip;
"And then how fine this herbage! men may say
"A heath is barren; nothing is so gay:
"Barren or bare to call such charming scene
"Argues a mind possess'd by care and spleen."

Onward he went, and fiercer grew the heat,
Dust rose in clouds before the horse's feet;
For now he pass'd through lanes of burning sand,
Bounds to thin crops or yet uncultured land;
Where the dark poppy flourish'd on the dry
And sterile soil, and mock'd the thin-set rye.

"How lovely this!" the rapt Orlando said;
"With what delight is labouring man repaid!

"The very lane has sweets that all admire,
"The rambling suckling, and the vigorous brier;
"See! wholesome wormwood grows beside the way,
"Where dew-press'd yet the dog-rose bends the spray;
"Fresh herbs the fields, fair shrubs the banks adorn,
"And snow-white bloom falls flaky from the thorn."

The Lover rode as hasty lovers ride,
And reach'd a common pasture wild and wide;
Small black-legg'd sheep devour with hunger keen
The meagre herbage, fleshless, lank, and lean:
He saw some scatter'd hovels; turf was piled
In square brown stacks; a prospect bleak and wild!
A mill, indeed, was in the centre found,
With short sear herbage withering all around;
A smith's black shed opposed a wright's long shop,
And join'd an inn where humble travellers stop.

"Ay, this is Nature," said the gentle Squire;
"This ease, peace, pleasure—who would not admire?
"With what delight these sturdy children play,
"And joyful rustics at the close of day;
"Sport follows labour, on this even space
"Will soon commence the wrestling and the race;
"Then will the village-maidens leave their home,
"And to the dance with buoyant spirits come;
"No affectation in their looks is seen,
"Nor know they what disguise or flattery mean;
"Nor aught to move an envious pang they see,
"Easy their service, and their love is free.

On rode Orlando, counting all the while
The miles he pass'd, and every coming mile;
When next appear'd a *dam*—so call the place—
Where lies a road confined in narrow space;
A work of labour, for on either side
Is level fen, a prospect wild and wide,
With dikes on either hand by ocean's self supplied:
Far on the right the distant sea is seen,
And salt the springs that feed the marsh between;
Beneath an ancient bridge, the straiten'd flood
Rolls through its sloping banks of slimy mud;
Near it a sunken boat resists the tide,
That frets and hurries to th' opposing side;
The rushes sharp, that on the borders grow,
Bend their brown flow'rets to the stream below,
Impure in all its course, in all its progress slow:
The few dull flowers that o'er the place are spread
Partake the nature of their fenny bed;
Here on its wiry stem, in rigid bloom,
Grows the salt lavender that lacks perfume;
Here the dwarf sallows creep, the septfoil harsh,
And the soft slimy mallow of the marsh;
Low on the ear the distant billows sound,
And just in view appears their stony bound;
No hedge nor tree conceals the glowing sun,
Birds, save a wat'ry tribe, the district shun,
Nor chirp among the reeds where bitter waters run.

"Various as beauteous, Nature, is thy face,"
Exclaim'd Orlando: "all that grows has grace;
"All are appropriate—bog, and marsh, and fen,
"Are only poor to undiscerning men;

"Here may the nice and curious eye explore
"How Nature's hand adorns the rushy moor;
"Here the rare moss in secret shade is found,
"Here the sweet myrtle of the shaking ground;
"Beauties are these that from the view retire,
"But well repay th' attention they require;
"For these, my Laura will her home forsake,
"And all the pleasures they afford partake."

Again, the country was enclosed, a wide
And sandy road has banks on either side;
Where, lo! a hollow on the left appear'd,
And there a Gipsy-tribe their tent had rear'd;
'Twas open spread, to catch the morning sun,
And they had now their early meal begun,
When two brown boys just left their grassy seat,
The early Trav'ller with their prayers to greet:
While yet Orlando held his pence in hand,
He saw their sister on her duty stand;
Some twelve years old, demure, affected, sly,
Prepared the force of early powers to try;
Sudden a look of languor he descries,
And well-feign'd apprehension in her eyes;
Train'd but yet savage, in her speaking face
He mark'd the features of her vagrant race;
When a light laugh and roguish leer express'd
The vice implanted in her youthful breast:
Forth from the tent her elder brother came,
Who seem'd offended, yet forbore to blame
The young designer, but could only trace
The looks of pity in the Trav'ller's face:

Within, the Father, who from fences nigh
Had brought the fuel for the fire's supply,
Watch'd now the feeble blaze, and stood dejected by:
On ragged rug, just borrow'd from the bed,
And by the hand of coarse indulgence fed,
In dirty patchwork negligently dress'd,
Reclined the Wife, an infant at her breast;
In her wild face some touch of grace remain'd,
Of vigour palsied and of beauty stain'd;
Her bloodshot eyes on her unheeding mate
Were wrathful turn'd, and seem'd her wants to state,
Cursing his tardy aid—her Mother there
With gipsy-state engross'd the only chair;
Solemn and dull her look; with such she stands,
And reads the milk-maid's fortune in her hands,
Tracing the lines of life; assumed through years,
Each feature now the steady falsehood wears:
With hard and savage eye she views the food,
And grudging pinches their intruding brood;
Last in the group, the worn-out Grandsire sits
Neglected, lost, and living but by fits;
Useless, despised, his worthless labour done,
And half protected by the vicious Son,
Who half supports him; he with heavy glance
Views the young ruffians who around him dance;
And, by the sadness of his face, appears
To trace the progress of their future years:
Through what strange course of misery, vice, deceit,
Must wildly wander each unpractised cheat!
What shame and grief, what punishment and pain,
Sport of fierce passions, must each child sustain—

Ere they like him approach their latter end,
Without a hope, a comfort, or a friend! *

But this Orlando felt not; "Rogues," said he,
"Doubtless they are, but merry rogues they be;
"They wander round the land, and be it true,
"They break the laws—then let the laws pursue
"The wanton idlers; for the life they live,
"Acquit I cannot, but I can forgive."
This said, a portion from his purse was thrown,
And every heart seem'd happy like his own.

He hurried forth, for now the town was nigh—
"The happiest man of mortal men am I."
Thou art! but change in every state is near,
(So while the wretched hope, the blest may fear);
"Say, where is Laura?"—"That her words must
show,"
A lass replied; "read this, and thou shalt know!"

"What, gone!—her friend insisted—forced to go:—
"Is vex'd, was teased, could not refuse her!—No?"
"But you can follow;" "Yes:" "The miles are few,
"The way is pleasant; will you come?—Adieu!
"Thy Laura!" "No! I feel I must resign
"The pleasing hope, thou hadst been here, if mine:
"A lady was it?—Was no brother there?
"But why should I afflict me, if there were?"
"The way is pleasant:" "What to me the way?
"I cannot reach her till the close of day.

* This picture is evidently finished *con amore*, and appears to us to be absolutely perfect, both in its moral and its physical expression.—JEFFREY.

"My dumb companion! is it thus we speed?
"Not I from grief nor thou from toil art freed;
"Still art thou doom'd to travel and to pine,
"For my vexation—What a fate is mine!"

Forth rode Orlando by a river's side,
Inland and winding, smooth, and full and wide,
That roll'd majestic on, in one soft-flowing tide;
The bottom gravel, flow'ry were the banks,
Tall willows, waving in their broken ranks;
The road, now near, now distant, winding led
By lovely meadows which the waters fed;
He pass'd the wayside inn, the village spire,
Nor stopp'd to gaze, to question, or admire;
On either side the rural mansions stood,
With hedgerow trees, and hills high-crown'd with wood,
And many a devious stream that reach'd the nobler flood.

"I hate these scenes," Orlando angry cried,
"And these proud farmers! yes, I hate their pride:
"See! that sleek fellow, how he strides along,
"Strong as an ox, and ignorant as strong;
"Can yon close crops a single eye detain
"But he who counts the profits of the grain?
"And these vile beans with deleterious smell,
"Where is their beauty? can a mortal tell?
"These deep fat meadows I detest; it shocks
"One's feelings there to see the grazing ox;—
"For slaughter fatted, as a lady's smile
"Rejoices man, and means his death the while.

"Lo! now the sons of labour! every day
"Employ'd in toil, and vex'd in every way;
"Theirs is but mirth assumed, and they conceal,
"In their affected joys, the ills they feel:
"I hate these long green lanes; there's nothing
seen
"In this vile country but eternal green;
"Woods! waters! meadows! Will they never end?
"'Tis a vile prospect:—Gone to see a friend!"—

Still on he rode! a mansion fair and tall
Rose on his view—the pride of Loddon Hall:
Spread o'er the park he saw the grazing steer,
The full-fed steed, and herds of bounding deer:
On a clear stream the vivid sunbeams play'd,
Through noble elms, and on the surface made
That moving picture, checker'd light and shade;
Th' attended children, there indulged to stray,
Enjoy'd and gave new beauty to the day;
Whose happy parents from their room were seen
Pleased with the sportive idlers on the green.

"Well!" said Orlando, "and for one so bless'd,
"A thousand reasoning wretches are distress'd;
"Nay, these so seeming glad, are grieving like the
rest:
"Man is a cheat—and all but strive to hide
"Their inward misery by their outward pride.
"What do yon lofty gates and walls contain,
"But fruitless means to soothe unconquer'd pain?
"The parents read each infant daughter's smile,
"Formed to seduce, encouraged to beguile;

"They view the boys unconscious of their fate,
"Sure to be tempted, sure to take the bait."

Our Trav'ller, lab'ring up a hill, look'd down
Upon a lively, busy, pleasant town;
All he beheld were there alert, alive,
The busiest bees that ever stock'd a hive:
A pair were married, and the bells aloud
Proclaim'd their joy, and joyful seem'd the crowd;
And now proceeding on his way, he spied,
Bound by strong ties, the bridegroom and the bride;
Each by some friends attended, near they drew,
And spleen beheld them with prophetic view.

"Married! nay, mad!" Orlando cried in scorn;
"Another wretch on this unlucky morn:
"What are this foolish mirth, these idle joys?
"Attempts to stifle doubt and fear by noise:
"To me these robes, expressive of delight,
"Foreshow distress, and only grief excite;
"And for these cheerful friends, will they behold
"Their wailing brood in sickness, want, and cold;
"And his proud look, and her soft languid air,
"Will—but I spare you—go, unhappy pair!"

And now approaching to the Journey's end,
His anger fails, his thoughts to kindness tend,
He less offended feels, and rather fears t' offend:
Now gently rising, hope contends with doubt,
And casts a sunshine on the views without;
And still reviving joy and lingering gloom
Alternate empire o'er his soul assume;

Till, long perplex'd, he now began to find
The softer thoughts engross the settling mind:
He saw the mansion, and should quickly see
His Laura's self—and angry could he be?
No! the resentment melted all away——
"For this my grief a single smile will pay,"
Our trav'ller cried;—"And why should it offend,
"That one so good should have a pressing friend?
"Grieve not, my heart! to find a favourite guest
"Thy pride and boast—ye selfish sorrows, rest;
"She will be kind, and I again be blest."

While gentler passions thus his bosom sway'd,
He reach'd the mansion, and he saw the maid;
"My Laura!"—"My Orlando!—this is kind;
"In truth I came persuaded, not inclined:
"Our friends' amusement let us now pursue,
"And I to-morrow will return with you."

Like man entranced, the happy Lover stood—
"As Laura wills, for she is kind and good;
"Ever the truest, gentlest, fairest, best—
"As Laura wills, I see her and am blest."

Home went the Lovers through that busy place,
By Loddon Hall, the country's pride and grace;
By the rich meadows where the oxen fed,
Through the green vale that form'd the river's bed;
And by unnumber'd cottages and farms,
That have for musing minds unnumber'd charms;
And how affected by the view of these
Was then Orlando—did they pain or please?

Nor pain nor pleasure could they yield—and why?
The mind was fill'd, was happy, and the eye
Roved o'er the fleeting views, that but appear'd to die.

Alone Orlando on the morrow paced
The well-known road; the gipsy-tent he traced;
The dam high-raised, the reedy dykes between,
The scatter'd hovels on the barren green,
The burning sand, the fields of thin-set rye,
Mock'd by the useless Flora, blooming by;
And last the heath with all its various bloom,
And the close lanes that led the trav'ller home.

Then could these scenes the former joys renew?
Or was there now dejection in the view?—
Nor one or other would they yield—and why?
The mind was absent, and the vacant eye
Wander'd o'er viewless scenes, that but appear'd to die.

EDWARD SHORE

GENIUS! thou gift of Heav'n! thou light divine!
Amid what dangers art thou doomed to shine!
Oft will the body's weakness check thy force,
Oft damp thy vigour, and impede thy course;
And trembling nerves compel thee to restrain
Thy nobler efforts, to contend with pain;
Or Want (sad guest!) will in thy presence come,
And breathe around her melancholy gloom;
To life's low cares will thy proud thought confine,
And make her sufferings, her impatience, thine.

Evil and strong, seducing passions prey
On soaring minds, and win them from their way,
Who then to Vice the subject spirits give,
And in the service of the conqu'ror live;
Like captive Samson making sport for all,
Who fear'd their strength, and glory in their fall.

Genius, with virtue, still may lack the aid
Implored by humble minds, and hearts afraid:
May leave to timid souls the shield and sword
Of the tried Faith, and the resistless Word;
Amid a world of dangers venturing forth,
Frail, but yet fearless, proud in conscious worth,

Till strong temptation, in some fatal time,
Assails the heart, and wins the soul to crime;
When left by honour, and by sorrow spent,
Unused to pray, unable to repent,
The nobler powers that once exalted high
Th' aspiring man, shall then degraded lie:
Reason, through anguish, shall her throne forsake,
And strength of mind but stronger madness make.

When *Edward Shore* had reached his twentieth year,
He felt his bosom light, his conscience clear;
Applause at school the youthful hero gain'd,
And trials there with manly strength sustain'd:
With prospects bright upon the world he came,
Pure love of virtue, strong desire of fame:
Men watch'd the way his lofty mind would take,
And all foretold the progress he would make.

Boast of these friends, to older men a guide,
Proud of his parts, but gracious in his pride;
He bore a gay good-nature in his face,
And in his air were dignity and grace;
Dress that became his state and years he wore,
And sense and spirit shone in Edward Shore.

Thus, while admiring friends the Youth beheld,
His own disgust their forward hopes repell'd;
For he unfix'd, unfixing, look'd around,
And no employment but in seeking found;
He gave his restless thoughts to views refined,
And shrank from worldly cares with wounded mind.

Rejecting trade, awhile he dwelt on laws,
"But who could plead, if unapproved the cause?"
A doubting, dismal tribe physicians seem'd;
Divines o'er texts and disputations dream'd;
War and its glory he perhaps could love,
But there again he must the cause approve.

Our hero thought no deed should gain applause
Where timid virtue found support in laws;
He to all good would soar, would fly all sin,
By the pure prompting of the will within;
"Who needs a law that binds him not to steal?"
Ask'd the young teacher; "can he rightly feel?
"To curb the will, or arm in honour's cause,
"Or aid the weak—are these enforced by laws?
"Should we a foul, ungenerous action dread,
"Because a law condemns th' adulterous bed?
"Or fly pollution, not for fear of stain,
"But that some statute tells us to refrain?
"The grosser herd in ties like these we bind,
"In virtue's freedom moves th' enlighten'd mind."

"Man's heart deceives him," said a friend.—"Of course,"
Replied the Youth; "but has it power to force?
"Unless it forces, call it as you will,
"It is but wish, and proneness to the ill."

"Art thou not tempted?"—"Do I fall?" said Shore.—
"The pure have fallen."—"Then are pure no more:
"While Reason guides me, I shall walk aright,
"Nor need a steadier hand, or stronger light;

"Nor this in dread of awful threats, design'd
"For the weak spirit and the grov'ling mind;
"But that, engaged by thoughts and views sublime,
"I wage free war with grossness and with crime."
Thus look'd he proudly on the vulgar crew,
Whom statutes govern, and whom fears subdue.

Faith, with his virtue, he indeed profess'd,
But doubts deprived his ardent mind of rest;
Reason, his sovereign mistress, fail'd to show
Light through the mazes of the world below:
Questions arose, and they surpass'd the skill
Of his sole aid, and would be dubious still;
These to discuss he sought no common guide,
But to the doubters in his doubts applied;
When all together might in freedom speak,
And their loved truth with mutual ardour seek.
Alas! though men who feel their eyes decay
Take more than common pains to find their way,
Yet, when for this they ask each other's aid,
Their mutual purpose is the more delay'd:
Of all their doubts, their reasoning clear'd not one,
Still the same spots were present in the sun;
Still the same scruples haunted Edward's mind,
Who found no rest, nor took the means to find.

But though with shaken faith, and slave to fame,
Vain and aspiring on the world he came;
Yet was he studious, serious, moral, grave,
No passion's victim, and no system's slave:
Vice he opposed, indulgence he disdain'd,
And o'er each sense in conscious triumph reign'd.

Who often reads, will sometimes wish to write,
And Shore would yield instruction and delight:
A serious drama he design'd, but found
'Twas tedious travelling in that gloomy ground;
A deep and solemn story he would try,
But grew ashamed of ghosts, and laid it by;
Sermons he wrote, but they who knew his creed,
Or knew it not, were ill disposed to read;
And he would lastly be the nation's guide,
But, studying, fail'd to fix upon a side;
Fame he desired, and talents he possess'd,
But loved not labour, though he could not rest,
Nor firmly fix the vacillating mind,
That, ever working, could no centre find.

In his own room, and with his books around,
His lively mind its chief employment found;
Then idly busy, quietly employ'd,
And, lost to life, his visions were enjoy'd:
Yet still he took a keen inquiring view
Of all that crowds neglect, desire, pursue;
And thus abstracted, curious, still, serene,
He unemploy'd, beheld life's shifting scene;
Still more averse from vulgar joys and cares,
Still more unfitted for the world's affairs.

A serious Friend our cautious Youth possess'd,
And at his table sat a welcome guest;
Both unemploy'd, it was their chief delight
To read what free and daring authors write;
Authors who loved from common views to soar,
And seek the fountains never traced before:

Truth they profess'd, yet often left the true
And beaten prospect, for the wild and new.
His chosen friend his fiftieth year had seen,
His fortune easy, and his air serene;
Deist and atheist call'd; for few agreed
What were his notions, principles, or creed;
His mind reposed not, for he hated rest,
But all things made a query or a jest;
Perplex'd himself, he ever sought to prove
That man is doom'd in endless doubt to rove;
Himself in darkness he profess'd to be,
And would maintain that not a man could see.

The youthful Friend, dissentient, reason'd still
Of the soul's prowess, and the subject-will;
Of virtue's beauty, and of honour's force,
And a warm zeal gave life to his discourse.

The Friend, indulging a sarcastic smile,
Said—"Dear enthusiast! thou wilt change thy style,
"When man's delusions, errors, crimes, deceit,
"No more distress thee, and no longer cheat."

Yet, lo! this cautious man, so coolly wise,
On a young Beauty fix'd unguarded eyes;
And her he married: Edward at the view
Bade to his cheerful visits long adieu;
But haply err'd, for this engaging bride
No mirth suppress'd, but rather cause supplied:
And when she saw the friends, by reasoning long,
Confused if right, and positive if wrong,
With playful speech and smile, that spoke delight,
She made them careless both of wrong and right.

This gentle damsel gave consent to wed,
With school and school-day dinners in her head:
She now was promised choice of daintiest food,
And costly dress, that made her sovereign good;
With walks on hilly heath to banish spleen,
And summer-visits when the roads were clean.
All these she loved, to these she gave consent,
And she was married to her heart's content.

Their manner this—the Friends together read,
Till books a cause for disputation bred;
Debate then follow'd, and the vapour'd child
Declared they argued till her head was wild;
And strange to her it was that mortal brain
Could seek the trial, or endure the pain.

Then as the Friend reposed, the younger pair
Sat down to cards, and play'd beside his chair;
Till he awaking, to his books applied,
Or heard the music of th' obedient bride:
If mild the evening, in the fields they stray'd,
And their own flock with partial eye survey'd;
But oft the husband, to indulgence prone,
Resumed his book, and bade them walk alone.

"Do, my kind Edward! I must take mine ease,
"Name the dear girl the planets and the trees;
"Tell her what warblers pour their evening song,
"What insects flutter, as you walk along;
"Teach her to fix the roving thoughts, to bind
"The wandering sense, and methodise the mind."

This was obey'd; and oft when this was done,
They calmly gazed on the declining sun;
In silence saw the glowing landscape fade,
Or, sitting, sang beneath the arbour's shade:
Till rose the moon, and on each youthful face
Shed a soft beauty, and a dangerous grace.

A sick relation for the husband sent;
Without delay the friendly sceptic went,
Nor fear'd the youthful pair, for he had seen
The wife untroubled, and the friend serene;
No selfish purpose in his roving eyes,
No vile deception in her fond replies:
So judged the husband, and with judgment true,
For neither yet the guilt or danger knew.

What now remain'd? but they again should play
Th' accustom'd game, and walk th' accustom'd way;
With careless freedom should converse or read,
And the Friend's absence neither fear nor heed:
But rather now they seem'd confused, constrain'd;
Within their room still restless they remain'd,
And painfully they felt, and knew each other pain'd.—
Ah, foolish men! how could ye thus depend,
One on himself, the other on his friend?

The Youth with troubled eye the lady saw,
Yet felt too brave, too daring to withdraw;
While she, with tuneless hand the jarring keys
Touching, was not one moment at her ease:
Now would she walk, and call her friendly guide,
Now speak of rain, and cast her cloke aside,

Seize on a book, unconscious what she read,
And restless still to new resources fled;
Then laugh'd aloud, then tried to look serene;
And ever changed, and every change was seen.

Painful it is to dwell on deeds of shame—
The trying day was past, another came;
The third was all remorse, confusion, dread,
And (all too late!) the fallen hero fled.

Then felt the Youth, in that seducing time,
How feebly Honour guards the heart from crime:
Small is his native strength; man needs the stay,
The strength imparted in the trying day;
For all that Honour brings against the force
Of headlong passion, aids its rapid course;
Its slight resistance but provokes the fire,
As wood-work stops the flame, and then conveys it higher.

The Husband came; a wife by guilt made bold
Had, meeting, soothed him, as in days of old;
But soon this fact transpired; her strong distress,
And his Friend's absence, left him nought to guess.

Still cool, though grieved, thus prudence bade him write—
"I cannot pardon, and I will not fight;
"Thou art too poor a culprit for the laws,
"And I too faulty to support my cause:
"All must be punish'd; I must sigh alone,
"At home thy victim for her guilt atone

"And thou, unhappy! virtuous now no more,
"Must loss of fame, peace, purity deplore;
"Sinners with praise will pierce thee to the heart,
"And saints deriding, tell thee what thou art."

Such was his fall; and Edward, from that time,
Felt in full force the censure and the crime—
Despised, ashamed; his noble views before,
And his proud thoughts, degraded him the more:
Should he repent—would that conceal his shame?
Could peace be his? It perished with his fame:
Himself he scorn'd, nor could his crime forgive;
He fear'd to die, yet felt ashamed to live:
Grieved, but not contrite was his heart; oppress'd,
Not broken; not converted, but distress'd;
He wanted will to bend the stubborn knee,
He wanted light the cause of ill to see,
To learn how frail is man, how humble then should be;
For faith he had not, or a faith too weak
To gain the help that humbled sinners seek;
Else had he pray'd—to an offended God
His tears had flown a penitential flood;
Though far astray, he would have heard the call
Of mercy—"Come! return, thou prodigal;"
Then, though confused, distress'd, ashamed, afraid,
Still had the trembling penitent obey'd;
Though faith had fainted, when assail'd by fear,
Hope to the soul had whisper'd, "Persevere!"
Till in his Father's house an humbled guest,
He would have found forgiveness, comfort, rest.

But all this joy was to our Youth denied
By his fierce passions, and his daring pride;
And shame and doubt impell'd him in a course,
Once so abhorr'd, with unresisted force.
Proud minds and guilty, whom their crimes oppress,
Fly to new crimes for comfort and redress;
So found our fallen Youth a short relief
In wine, the opiate guilt applies to grief,—
From fleeting mirth that o'er the bottle lives,
From the false joy its inspiration gives;
And from associates pleased to find a friend,
With powers to lead them, gladden, and defend,
In all those scenes where transient ease is found,
For minds whom sins oppress, and sorrows wound.

Wine is like anger; for it makes us strong,
Blind and impatient, and it leads us wrong;
The strength is quickly lost, we feel the error long:
Thus led, thus strengthen'd, in an evil cause,
For folly pleading, sought the Youth applause;
Sad for a time, then eloquently wild,
He gaily spoke as his companions smiled;
Lightly he rose, and with his former grace
Proposed some doubt, and argued on the case;
Fate and foreknowledge were his favourite themes—
How vain man's purpose, how absurd his schemes:
"Whatever is, was ere our birth decreed;
"We think our actions from ourselves proceed,
"And idly we lament th' inevitable deed;
"It seems our own, but there's a power above
"Directs the motion, nay, that makes us move;

"Nor good nor evil can you beings name,
"Who are but rooks and castles in the game;
"Superior natures with their puppets play,
"Till, bagg'd or buried, all are swept away."

Such were the notions of a mind to ill
Now prone, but ardent, and determined still:
Of joy now eager, as before of fame,
And screen'd by folly when assail'd by shame,
Deeply he sank; obey'd each passion's call,
And used his reason to defend them all.

With Virtue, prudence fled; what Shore possess'd
Was sold, was spent, and he was now distress'd:
And Want, unwelcome stranger, pale and wan,
Met with her haggard looks the hurried man;
His pride felt keenly what he must expect
From useless pity and from cold neglect.

Struck by new terrors, from his friends he fled,
And wept his woes upon a restless bed;
Retiring late, at early hour to rise,
With shrunken features, and with bloodshot eyes:
If sleep one moment closed the dismal view,
Fancy her terrors built upon the true:
And night and day had their alternate woes,
That baffled pleasure, and that mock'd repose;
Till to despair and anguish was consign'd
The wreck and ruin of a noble mind.

Now seized for debt, and lodged within a jail,
He tried his friendships, and he found them fail;

Then fail'd his spirits, and his thoughts were all
Fix'd on his sins, his sufferings, and his fall:
His ruffled mind was pictured in his face,
Once the fair seat of dignity and grace:
Great was the danger of a man so prone
To think of madness, and to think alone;
Yet pride still lived, and struggled to sustain
The drooping spirit, and the roving brain:
But this too fail'd: a Friend his freedom gave,
And sent him help the threat'ning world to brave;
Gave solid counsel what to seek or flee,
But still would stranger to his person be:
In vain! the truth determined to explore,
He traced the Friend whom he had wrong'd before.

This was too much; both aided and advised
By one who shunn'd him, pitied, and despised:
He bore it not; 'twas a deciding stroke,
And on his reason like a torrent broke:
In dreadful stillness he appeared awhile,
With vacant horror and a ghastly smile;
Then rose at once into the frantic rage,
That force controll'd not, nor could love assuage.

Friends now appear'd, but in the Man was seen
The angry Maniac, with vindictive mien;
Too late their pity gave to care and skill
The hurried mind and ever-wandering will;
Unnoticed pass'd all time, and not a ray
Of reason broke on his benighted way;

But now he spurn'd the straw in pure disdain,
And now laugh'd loudly at the clinking chain.

Then as its wrath subsided, by degrees
The mind sank slowly to infantine ease;
To playful folly, and to causeless joy,
Speech without aim, and without end, employ;
He drew fantastic figures on the wall,
And gave some wild relation of them all;
With brutal shape he join'd the human face,
And idiot smiles approved the motley race.

Harmless at length th' unhappy man was found,
The spirit settled, but the reason drown'd;
And all the dreadful tempest died away,
To the dull stillness of the misty day.

And now his freedom he attain'd,—if free
The lost to reason, truth, and hope, can be;
His friends, or wearied with the charge, or sure
The harmless wretch was now beyond a cure,
Gave him to wander where he pleased, and find
His own resources for the eager mind:
The playful children of the place he meets,
Playful with them he rambles through the streets;
In all they need, his stronger arm he lends,
And his lost mind to these approving friends.

Rarely from town, nor then unwatch'd, he goes,
In darker mood, as if to hide his woes;
Returning soon, he with impatience seeks
His youthful friends, and shouts, and sings, and speaks;

Speaks a wild speech with action all as wild—
The children's leader, and himself a child;
He spins their top, or, at their bidding, bends
His back, while o'er it leap his laughing friends;
Simple and weak, he acts the boy once more,
And heedless children call him *Silly Shore*.

THE MOTHER

THERE was a worthy, but a simple Pair,
Who nursed a Daughter, fairest of the fair:
Sons they had lost, and she alone remain'd,
Heir to the kindness they had all obtain'd;
Heir to the fortune they design'd for all,
Nor had th' allotted portion then been small;
But now, by fate enrich'd with beauty rare,
They watch'd their treasure with peculiar care:
The fairest features they could early trace,
And, blind with love, saw merit in her face—
Saw virtue, wisdom, dignity, and grace;
And *Dorothea,* from her infant years,
Gain'd all her wishes from their pride or fears:
She wrote a billet, and a novel read,
And with her fame her vanity was fed;
Each word, each look, each action was a cause
For flattering wonder, and for fond applause;
She rode or danced, and ever glanced around,
Seeking for praise, and smiling when she found.
The yielding pair to her petitions gave
An humble friend to be a civil slave;
Who for a poor support herself resign'd
To the base toil of a dependent mind:

By nature cold, our Heiress stoop'd to art,
To gain the credit of a tender heart.
Hence at her door must suppliant paupers stand,
To bless the bounty of her beauteous hand:
And now, her education all complete,
She talk'd of virtuous love and union sweet;
She was indeed by no soft passion moved,
But wish'd, with all her soul, to be beloved.
Here, on the favour'd beauty Fortune smiled;
Her chosen Husband was a man so mild,
So humbly temper'd, so intent to please,
It quite distress'd her to remain at ease,
Without a cause to sigh, without pretence to tease:
She tried his patience in a thousand modes,
And tired it not upon the roughest roads.
Pleasure she sought, and, disappointed, sigh'd
For joys, she said, "to her alone denied;"
And she was "sure her parents, if alive,
"Would many comforts for their child contrive:"
The gentle Husband bade her name him one;
"No—that," she answer'd, "should for her be done;
"How could she say what pleasures were around?
"But she was certain many might be found."—
"Would she some seaport, Weymouth, Scarborough,
grace?"
"He knew she hated every watering-place:"—
"The town?"—"What! now 'twas empty, joyless,
dull?"
—"In winter?"—"No; she liked it worse when
full."
She talk'd of building—"Would she plan a room?"—
"No! she could live, as he desired, in gloom:"

"Call then our friends and neighbours:"—"He might call,
"And they might come and fill his ugly hall;
"A noisy vulgar set, he knew she scorn'd them all:"—
"Then might their two dear girls the time employ,
"And their improvement yield a solid joy;"—
"Solid indeed! and heavy—oh! the bliss
"Of teaching letters to a lisping miss!"—
"My dear, my gentle Dorothea, say,
"Can I oblige you?"—"You may go away."

Twelve heavy years this patient soul sustain'd
This wasp's attacks, and then her praise obtain'd,
Graved on a marble tomb, where he at peace remain'd.

Two daughters wept their loss; the one a child
With a plain face, strong sense, and temper mild,
Who keenly felt the Mother's angry taunt,
"Thou art the image of thy pious Aunt:"
Long time had *Lucy* wept her slighted face,
And then began to smile at her disgrace.
Her father's sister, who the world had seen
Near sixty years when Lucy saw sixteen,
Begg'd the plain girl: the gracious Mother smiled,
And freely gave her grieved but passive child;
And with her elder-born, the beauty blest,
This parent rested, if such minds can rest:
No miss her waxen babe could so admire,
Nurse with such care, or with such pride attire;
They were companions meet, with equal mind,
Bless'd with one love, and to one point inclined;

Beauty to keep, adorn, increase, and guard,
Was their sole care, and had its full reward:
In rising splendour with the one it reign'd,
And in the other was by care sustain'd,
The daughter's charms increased, the parent's yet
remain'd.

Leave we these ladies to their daily care,
To see how meekness and discretion fare:—
A village maid, unvex'd by want or love,
Could not with more delight than Lucy move;
The village-lark, high mounted in the spring,
Could not with purer joy than Lucy sing;
Her cares all light, her pleasures all sincere,
Her duty joy, and her companion dear;
There was such goodness, such pure nature seen
In Lucy's looks, a manner so serene;
Such harmony in motion, speech, and air,
That without fairness she was more than fair,
Had more than beauty in each speaking grace,
That lent their cloudless glory to the face.

Among their chosen friends, a favour'd few,
The aunt and niece a youthful Rector knew;
Who, though a younger brother, might address
A younger sister, fearless of success:
His friends, a lofty race, their native pride
At first display'd, and their assent denied;
But, pleased such virtues and such love to trace,
They own'd she would adorn the loftiest race.
The Aunt, a mother's caution to supply,
Had watch'd the youthful priest with jealous eye;

And, anxious for her charge, had view'd unseen
The cautious life that keeps the conscience clean:
In all she found him all she wish'd to find,
With slight exception of a lofty mind:
A certain manner that express'd desire,
To be received as brother to the Squire.
Lucy's meek eye had beam'd with many a tear,
Lucy's soft heart had beat with many a fear,
Before he told (although his looks, she thought,
Had oft confess'd) that he her favour sought:
But when he kneel'd, (she wish'd him not to kneel,)
And spoke the fears and hopes that lovers feel;
When too the prudent aunt herself confess'd,
Her wishes on the gentle youth would rest;
The maiden's eye with tender passion beam'd,
She dwelt with fondness on the life she schemed;
The household cares, the soft and lasting ties
Of love, with all his binding charities;
Their village taught, consoled, assisted, fed,
Till the young zealot tears of pleasure shed.

But would her Mother? Ah! she fear'd it wrong
To have indulged these forward hopes so long;
Her gentle aunt, with smiles that angels wear,
Dispell'd her Lucy's apprehensive tear:
Her prudent foresight the request had made
To one whom none could govern, few persuade;
She doubted much if one in earnest woo'd
A girl with not a single charm endued;
The Sister's nobler views she then declared,
And what small sum for Lucy could be spared;

"If more than this the foolish priest requires,
"Tell him," she wrote, "to check his vain desires."
At length, with many a cold expression mix'd,
With many a sneer on girls so fondly fix'd,
There came a promise—should they not repent,
But take with grateful minds the portion meant,
And wait the Sister's day—the Mother might consent.

And here, might pitying hope o'er truth prevail,
Or love o'er fortune, we would end our tale;
For who more blest than youthful pair removed
From fear of want—by mutual friends approved—
Short time to wait, and in that time to live
With all the pleasures hope and fancy give;
Their equal passion raised on just esteem,
When reason sanctions all that love can dream?

Yes! reason sanctions what stern fate denies:
The early prospect in the glory dies,
As the soft smiles on dying infants play
In their mild features, and then pass away.

The *Beauty* died, ere she could yield her hand
In the high marriage by the Mother plann'd;
Who grieved indeed, but found a vast relief
In a cold heart, that ever warr'd with grief.

Lucy was present when her sister died,
Heiress to duties that she ill supplied:
There were no mutual feelings, sister arts,
No kindred taste, nor intercourse of hearts;

When in the mirror play'd the matron's smile,
The maiden's thoughts were trav'lling all the while;
And when desired to speak, she sigh'd to find
Her pause offended; "Envy made her blind:
"Tasteless she was, nor had a claim in life
"Above the station of a rector's wife;
"Yet as an heiress, she must shun disgrace,
"Although no heiress to her mother's face:
"It is your duty," said th' imperious dame,
"(Advanced your fortune) to advance your name,
"And with superior rank, superior offers claim:
"Your sister's lover, when his sorrows die,
"May look upon you, and for favour sigh;
"Nor can you offer a reluctant hand;
"His birth is noble, and his seat is grand."

Alarm'd was Lucy, was in tears—"A fool!
"Was she a child in love?—a miss at school?
"Doubts any mortal, if a change of state
"Dissolves all claims and ties of earlier date?"

The Rector doubted, for he came to mourn
A sister dead, and with a wife return:
Lucy with heart unchanged received the youth,
True in herself, confiding in his truth;
Her Mother vow'd her purpose to pursue,
Judged her own cause, and bade the youth adieu!
The lover begg'd, insisted, urged his pain,
His brother wrote to threaten and complain,
Her sister reasoning proved the promise made,
Lucy appealing to a parent pray'd;

She coldly answer'd in her wonted way,
That she "would rule, and Lucy must obey."

Lucy, meantime, though threaten'd and distress'd;
Against her marriage made a strong protest:
All was domestic war; the Aunt rebell'd
Against the sovereign will, and was expell'd;
And every power was tried, and every art,
To bend to falsehood one determined heart;
Assail'd, in patience it received the shock,
Soft as the wave, unshaken as the rock:
But while th' unconquer'd soul endures the storm
Of angry fate, it preys upon the form;
With conscious virtue she resisted still,
And conscious love gave vigour to her will:
But Lucy's trial was at hand; with joy
The Mother cried—"Behold your constant boy—
"Thursday—was married:—take the paper, sweet,
"And read the conduct of your reverend cheat;
"See with what pomp of coaches, in what crowd
"The creature married—of his falsehood proud!
"False, did I say?—at least no whining fool;
"And thus will hopeless passions ever cool:
"But shall his bride your single state reproach?
"No! give him crowd for crowd, and coach for coach.
"Oh! you retire; reflect then, gentle miss,
"And gain some spirit in a cause like this."

Some spirit Lucy gain'd; a steady soul,
Defying all persuasion, all control:
In vain reproach, derision, threats were tried;
The constant mind all outward force defied,

Fix'd in her purpose, perfect in her part,
She felt the courage of a wounded heart;
The world receded from her rising view,
And heaven approach'd as earthly things withdrew.

Surprised, the Mother saw the languid frame,
And felt indignant, yet forbore to blame:
Once with a frown she cried, "And do you mean
"To die of love—the folly of fifteen?"
But as her anger met with no reply,
She let the gentle girl in quiet die;
Lucy meantime profess'd with joy sincere,
That nothing held, employ'd, engaged her here.

As toll'd the bell, "There's one," she said, "hath press'd
"Awhile before me to the bed of rest,
"I am an humble actor, doom'd to play
"A part obscure, and then to glide away:
"In its best prospect I but wish'd, for life,
"To be th' assiduous, gentle, useful wife;
"That lost, with wearied mind, and spirit poor,
"I drop my efforts, and can act no more."

While quickly thus the mortal part declin'd,
The happiest visions fill'd the active mind;
A soft, religious melancholy gain'd
Entire possession, and for ever reign'd:
On Holy Writ her mind reposing dwelt,
She saw the wonders, she the mercies felt;
Till in a blest and glorious reverie,
She seem'd the Saviour as on earth to see,
And, fill'd with love divine, th' attending friend to be;

Or she who trembling, yet confiding, stole
Near to the garment, touch'd it, and was whole;
When, such th' intenseness of the working thought,
On her it seem'd the very deed was wrought;
She the glad patient's fear and rapture found,
The holy transport, and the healing wound;
This was so fix'd, so grafted in the heart,
That she adopted, nay became the part:
But one chief scene was present to her sight,
Her Saviour resting in the tomb by night;
Her fever rose, and still her wedded mind
Was to that scene, that hallow'd cave, confin'd—
Where in the shade of death the body laid,
There watch'd the spirit of the wandering maid;
Her looks were fix'd, entranced, illumed, serene,
In the still glory of the midnight scene:
There at her Saviour's feet, in visions blest,
Th' enraptured maid a sacred joy possess'd;
In patience waiting for the first-born ray
Of that all-glorious and triumphant day:
To this idea all her soul she gave,
Her mind reposing by the sacred grave;
Then sleep would seal the eye, the vision close,
And steep the solemn thoughts in brief repose.

Then grew the soul serene, and all its powers
Again restored, illumed the dying hours;
But reason dwelt where fancy stray'd before,
And the mind wander'd from its views no more;
Till death approach'd, when every look express'd
A sense of bliss, till every sense had rest.

The Mother lives, and has enough to buy
Th' attentive ear and the submissive eye
Of abject natures—these are daily told,
How triumph'd beauty in the days of old;
How, by her window seated, crowds have cast
Admiring glances, wondering as they pass'd;
How from her carriage as she stepp'd to pray,
Divided ranks would humbly make her way;
And how each voice in the astonish'd throng
Pronounced her peerless as she moved along.

Her picture then the greedy Dame displays;
Touch'd by no shame, she now demands its praise;
In her tall mirror then she shows a face,
Still coldly fair with unaffecting grace;
These she compares, "It has the form," she cries,
"But wants the air, the spirit, and the eyes;
"This, as a likeness, is correct and true,
"But there alone the living grace we view."
This said, th' applauding voice the Dame required,
And, gazing, slowly from the glass retired.

THE MEETING OF THE BROTHERS *

THE Brothers met, who many a year had past
Since their last meeting, and that seem'd their last;
They had no parent then or common friend
Who might their hearts to mutual kindness bend:
Who, touching both in their divided state,
Might generous thoughts and warm desires create;
For there are minds whom we must first excite
And urge to feeling, ere they can unite:
As we may hard and stubborn metals beat
And blend together, if we duly heat.

The elder, George, had past his threescore years,
A busy actor, sway'd by hopes and fears
Of powerful kind: and he had fill'd the parts
That try our strength and agitate our hearts.
He married not, and yet he well approved
The social state; but then he rashly loved;
Gave to a strong delusion all his youth,
Led by a vision till alarm'd by truth:
That vision past, and of that truth possess'd,
His passions wearied and disposed to rest,
George yet had will and power a place to choose,
Where Hope might sleep, and terminate her views.

* NOTE C.—The Meeting of the Brothers.

He chose his native village, and the hill
He climb'd a boy had its attraction still;
With that small brook beneath, where he would stand
And stooping fill the hollow of his hand
To quench th' impatient thirst—then stop awhile
To see the sun upon the waters smile,
In that sweet weariness, when, long denied,
We drink and view the fountain that supplied
The sparkling bliss—and feel, if not express,
Our perfect ease in that sweet weariness.

The oaks yet flourish'd in that fertile ground,
Where still the church with lofty tower was found
And still that Hall, a first, a favourite view,
But not the elms that form'd its avenue;
They fell ere George arrived, or yet had stood,
For he in reverence held the living wood,
That widely spreads in earth the deepening root,
And lifts to heaven the still aspiring shoot;
From age to age they fill'd a growing space,
But hid the mansion they were meant to grace.

It was an ancient, venerable Hall,
And once surrounded by a moat and wall;
A part was added by a squire of taste,
Who, while unvalued acres ran to waste,
Made spacious rooms, whence he could look about,
And mark improvements as they rose without:
He fill'd the moat, he took the wall away,
He thinn'd the park, and bade the view be gay:
The scene was rich, but he who should behold
Its worth was poor, and so the whole was sold.

Just then the Merchant from his desk retired,
And made the purchase that his heart desired;
The Hall of Binning, his delight a boy,
That gave his fancy in her flight employ;
Here, from his father's modest home, he gazed,
Its grandeur charm'd him, and its height amazed:
But never in his fancy's proudest dream
Did he the master of that mansion seem:
Young was he then, and little did he know
What years on care and diligence bestow;
Now young no more, retired to views well known,
He finds that object of his awe his own:
The Hall at Binning!—how he loves the gloom
That sun-excluding window gives the room;
Those broad brown stairs on which he loves to tread;
Those beams within; without, that length of lead,
On which the names of wanton boys appear,
Who died old men, and left memorials here,
Carvings of feet and hands and knots and flowers,
The fruits of busy minds in idle hours!

Here day by day, withdrawn from busy life,
No child t' awake him, to engage no wife,
When friends were absent, not to books inclined,
He found a sadness steal upon his mind;
Sighing, the works of former lords to see,
"I follow them," he cried, "but who will follow me?"

George loved to think; but as he late began
To muse on all the grander thoughts of man,
He took a solemn and a serious view
Of his religion, and he found it true;

Firmly, yet meekly, he his mind applied
To this great subject, and was satisfied.

He then proceeded, not so much intent,
But still in earnest, and to church he went:
Although they found some difference in their creed,
He and his pastor cordially agreed;
Convinced that they who would the truth obtain
By disputation, find their efforts vain;
The church he view'd as liberal minds will view,
And there he fix'd his principles and pew.

He saw, he thought he saw, how Weakness, Pride,
And Habit, draw seceding crowds aside:
Weakness that loves on trifling points to dwell,
Pride that at first from Heaven's own worship fell,
And Habit, going where it went before,
Or to the meeting or the tavern door.

George loved the cause of freedom, but reproved
All who with wild and boyish ardour loved;
Those who believed they never could be free,
Except when fighting for their liberty;
Who by their very clamour and complaint
Invite coercion or enforce restraint:
He thought a trust so great, so good a cause,
Was only to be kept by guarding laws;
For public blessings firmly to secure,
We must a lessening of the good endure.
The public waters are to none denied—
All drink the stream, but only few must guide;
There must be reservoirs to hold supply,
And channels form'd to send the blessing by;

The public good must be a private care,
None all they would may have, but all a share:
So we must freedom with restraint enjoy,
What crowds possess they will, uncheck'd, destroy;
And hence, that freedom may to all be dealt,
Guards must be fix'd, and safety must be felt.
So thought our squire, nor wished the guards t' appear
So strong, that safety might be bought too dear;
The Constitution was the ark that he
Join'd to support with zeal and sanctity,
Nor would expose it, as th' accursed son
His father's weakness, to be gazed upon.

I for that Freedom make, said he, my prayer,
That suits with all, like atmospheric air;
That is to mortal man by heaven assign'd,
Who cannot bear a pure and perfect kind:
The lighter gas, that, taken in the frame,
The spirit heats, and sets the blood in flame,
Such is the freedom which when men approve,
They know not what a dangerous thing they love.

George chose the company of men of sense,
But could with wit in moderate share dispense;
He wish'd in social ease his friends to meet,
When still he thought the female accent sweet;
Well from the ancient, better from the young,
He loved the lispings of the mother tongue.

He ate and drank, as much as men who think
Of life's best pleasures, ought to eat or drink;
Men purely temperate might have taken less,
But still he loved indulgence, not excess;

Nor would alone the grants of Fortune taste,
But shared the wealth he judged it crime to waste,
And thus obtain'd the sure reward of care;
For none can spend like him who learns to spare.

Time, thought, and trouble made the man appear—
By nature shrewd—sarcastic and severe;
Still he was one whom those who fully knew
Esteem'd and trusted, one correct and true;
All on his word with surety might depend,
Kind as a man, and faithful as a friend:
But him the many know not, knew not cause
In their new squire for censure or applause;
Ask them, "Who dwelt within that lofty wall?"
And they would say, "The gentleman was tall;
"Look'd old when follow'd, but alert when met,
"And had some vigour in his movements yet;
"He stoops, but not as one infirm; and wears
"Dress that becomes his station and his years."

Such was the man who from the world return'd,
Nor friend nor foe; he prized it not, nor spurn'd;
But came and sat him in his village down,
Safe from its smile, and careless of its frown:
He, fairly looking into life's account,
Saw frowns and favours were of like amount;
And viewing all—his perils, prospects, purse,
He said, "Content! 'tis well it is no worse."

Through ways more rough had fortune Richard led,
The world he traversed was the book he read;

Hence clashing notions and opinions strange
Lodged in his mind; all liable to change.
By nature generous, open, daring, free,
The vice he hated was hypocrisy;
Religious notions, in her latter years,
His mother gave, admonish'd by her fears;
To these he added, as he chanced to read
A pious work or learn a Christian creed:
He heard the preacher by the highway side,
The church's teacher and the meeting's guide;
And mixing all their matters in his brain,
Distill'd a something he could ill explain;
But still it served him for his daily use,
And kept his lively passions from abuse;
For he believed, and held in reverence high,
The truth so dear to man — "not all shall die."
The minor portions of his creed hung loose,
For time to shapen and a whole produce:
This Love effected, and a favourite maid,
With clearer views, his honest flame repaid;
Hers was the thought correct, the hope sublime,
She shaped his creed, and did the work of time.

He spake of freedom as a nation's cause,
And loved, like George, our liberty and laws;
But had more youthful ardour to be free,
And stronger fears for injured liberty:
With him, on various questions that arose,
The monarch's servants were the people's foes;
And though he fought with all a Briton's zeal,
He felt for France as Freedom's children feel;

Went far with her in what she thought reform,
And hail'd the revolutionary storm;
Yet would not here, where there was least to win,
And most to lose, the doubtful work begin;
But look'd on change with some religious fear,
And cried, with filial dread, "Ah! come not here."

His friends he did not as the thoughtful choose,
Long to deliberate was, he judged, to lose:
Frankly he join'd the free, nor suffer'd pride
Or doubt to part them, whom their fate allied;
Men with such minds at once each other aid,
"Frankness," they cry, "with frankness is repaid;
"If honest, why suspect? if poor, of what afraid?
"Wealth's timid votaries may with caution move,
"Be it our wisdom to confide and love."

So pleasures came, (not purchased first or plann'd)
But the chance pleasures that the poor command;
They came but seldom, they remain'd not long,
Nor gave him time to question "Are they wrong?"
These he enjoy'd, and left to after time
To judge the folly or decide the crime;
Sure had he been, he had perhaps been pure
From this reproach—but Richard was not sure—
Yet from the sordid vice, the mean, the base,
He stood aloof—death frown'd not like disgrace.

With handsome figure, and with manly air,
He pleased the sex, who all to him were fair;
With filial love he look'd on forms decay'd,
And Admiration's debt to Beauty paid;

On sea or land, wherever Richard went,
He felt affection, and he found content;
There was in him a strong presiding hope
In Fortune's tempests, and it bore him up:
But when that mystic vine his mansion graced,
When numerous branches round his board were placed,
When sighs of apprehensive love were heard,
Then first the spirit of the hero fear'd;
Then he reflected on the father's part,
And all a husband's sorrow touch'd his heart;
Then thought he, "Who will their assistance lend?
"And be the children's guide, the parent's friend?
"Who shall their guardian, their protector be?
"I have a brother—Well!—and so has he."

And now they met: a message—kind, 'tis true,
But verbal only—ask'd an interview;
And many a mile, perplex'd by doubt and fear,
Had Richard pass'd, unwilling to appear—
"How shall I now my unknown way explore,
"He proud and rich—I very proud and poor?
"Perhaps my friend a dubious speech mistook,
"And George may meet me with a stranger's look;
"Then to my home when I return again,
"How shall I bear this business to explain,
"And tell of hopes raised high, and feelings hurt, in vain?

"How stands the case? My brother's friend and mine
"Met at an inn, and sat them down to dine:
"When having settled all their own affairs,
"And kindly canvass'd such as were not theirs,

"Just as my friend was going to retire,
"'Stay!—you will see the brother of our squire,'
"Said his companion; 'be his friend, and tell
"'The captain that his brother loves him well,
"'And when he has no better thing in view,
"'Will be rejoiced to see him—Now, adieu!'

"Well! here I am; and, Brother, take you heed,
"I am not come to flatter you and feed;
"You shall no soother, fawner, hearer find,
"I will not brush your coat, nor smooth your mind;
"I will not hear your tales the whole day long,
"Nor swear you're right if I believe you wrong:
"Nor be a witness of the facts you state,
"Nor as my own adopt your love or hate:
"I will not earn my dinner when I dine,
"By taking all your sentiments for mine;
"Nor watch the guiding motions of your eye,
"Before I venture question or reply;
"Nor, when you speak, affect an awe profound,
"Sinking my voice, as if I fear'd the sound;
"Nor to your looks obediently attend,
"The poor, the humble, the dependent friend:
"Yet son of that dear mother could I meet—
"But lo! the mansion—'tis a fine old seat!"
The Brothers met, with both too much at heart
To be observant of each other's part;
"Brother, I'm glad," was all that George could say,
Then stretch'd his hand, and turn'd his head away;
For he in tender tears had no delight,
But scorn'd the thought, and ridiculed the sight;

Yet now with pleasure, though with some surprise,
He felt his heart o'erflowing at his eyes.

Richard, meantime, made some attempts to speak,
Strong in his purpose, in his trial weak ;
We cannot nature by our wishes rule,
Nor at our will her warm emotions cool :—
At length affection, like a risen tide,
Stood still, and then seem'd slowly to subside ;
Each on the other's looks had power to dwell,
And Brother Brother greeted passing well.

THE MORNING WALK

EIGHT days had pass'd: the Brothers now could meet
With ease, and take the customary seat.

"These," said the host, for he perceived where stray'd
His brother's eye, and what he now survey'd;
"These are the costly trifles that we buy,
"Urged by the strong demands of vanity,
"The thirst and hunger of a mind diseased,
"That must with purchased flattery be appeased;
"But yet, 'tis true, the things that you behold
"Serve to amuse us as we're getting old:
"These Pictures, as I heard our artists say,
"Are genuine all, and I believe they may;
"They cost the genuine sums, and I should grieve
"If, being willing, I could not believe.
"Music you find; for hither ladies come;
"They make infernal uproar in the room.
"I bear it. Why? because I must expect
"To pay for honour, and I fear neglect:
"For, as attractions from our person fly,
"Our purses, Richard, must the want supply;
"Yet would it vex me could the triflers know
"That they can shut out comfort or bestow.

"But see this room: here, Richard, you will find
"Books for all palates, food for every mind;
"This readers term the ever-new delight,
"And so it is, if minds have appetite:
"Mine once was craving: great my joy, indeed,
"Had I possess'd such food when I could feed;
"When at the call of every new-born wish
"I could have keenly relish'd every dish—
"Now, Richard, now I stalk around and look
"Upon the dress and title of a book,
"Try half a page, and then can taste no more,
"But the dull volume to its place restore:
"Begin a second slowly to peruse,
"Then cast it by, and look about for news;
"The news itself grows dull in long debates,—
"I skip, and see what the conclusion states;
"And many a speech, with zeal and study made
"Cold and resisting spirits to persuade,
"Is lost on mine; alone, we cease to feel
"What crowds admire, and wonder at their zeal.

"But how the day? No fairer will it be?
"Walk you? Alas! 'tis requisite for me—
"Nay, let me not prescribe—my friends and guests
are free."

It was a fair and mild autumnal sky,
And earth's ripe treasures met th' admiring eye.
The wet and heavy grass, where feet had stray'd,
Not yet erect, the wanderer's way betray'd;

Showers of the night had swell'd the deep'ning rill,
The morning breeze had urged the quick'ning mill;
Assembled rooks had wing'd their seaward flight,
While proudly o'er them hung the steady kite,
Then turn'd him back, and left the noisy throng,
Nor deign'd to know them as he sail'd along.
Long yellow leaves, from osiers, strew'd around,
Choked the small stream, and hush'd the feeble sound;
While the dead foliage dropt from loftier trees,
Our Squire beheld not with his wonted ease;
But to his own reflections made reply,
And said aloud, "Yes! doubtless we must die."

"We must," said Richard; "and we would not live
"To feel what dotage and decay will give;
"But we yet taste whatever we behold.
"The morn is lovely, though the air is cold:
"There is delicious quiet in this scene,
"At once so rich, so varied, so serene;
"Sounds too delight us,—each discordant tone
"Thus mingled please, that fail to please alone;
"This hollow wind, this rustling of the brook,
"The farm-yard noise, the woodman at yon oak—
"That gun itself, that breaks upon the ear,
"Has something suited to the dying year.

"No doubt," said George, "the country has its charms.
"My farm behold! the model for all farms!

"Look at that land—you find not there a weed,
"We grub the roots, and suffer none to seed.
"To land like this no botanist will come,
"To seek the precious ware he hides at home;
"Pressing the leaves and flowers with effort nice,
"As if they came from herbs in Paradise;
"Let them their favourites with my neighbours see,
"They have no—what?—no *habitat* with me."

They walk'd along, through mead and shaded wood,
And stubble ground, where late abundance stood,
And in the vale, where winter waters glide,
O'er pastures stretching up the mountain side.

"See! that unrivall'd flock! they, they alone
"Have the vast body on the slender bone;
"They are the village boast, the country's theme,
"Fleece of such staple! flesh in such esteem!"

Richard gave praise, but not in rapturous style;
He chose his words, and spoke them with a smile:
"Brother," said he, "and if I take you right,
"I am full glad—these things are your delight;
"I see you proud, but," —speaking half aside—
"Is, now, the pleasure equal to the pride?"
A transient flush on George's face appear'd,
Cloudy he look'd, and then his looks were clear'd.

"So says my bailiff: sometimes I have tried
"To catch the joy, but nature has denied;

"It will not be—the mind has had a store
"Laid up for life, and will admit no more:
"Worn out in trials, and about to die,
"In vain to these we for amusement fly;
"We farm, we garden, we our poor employ,
"And much command, though little we enjoy;
"Or, if ambitious, we employ our pen,
"We plant a desert, or we drain a fen;
"And—here, behold my medal!—this will show
"What men may merit when they nothing know."

"Yet reason here," said Richard, "joins with pride."
"I did not ask th' alliance," George replied—
"I grant it true, such trifles may induce
"A dull, proud man to wake and be of use;
"And there are purer pleasures, that a mind
"Calm and uninjured may in villas find;
"But where th' affections have been deeply tried,
"With other food that mind must be supplied:
"'Tis not in trees or medals to impart
"The powerful medicine for an aching heart;
"The agitation dies, but there is still
"The backward spirit, the resisting will.
"Man takes his body to a country seat,
"But minds, dear Richard, have their own retreat;
"Oft when the feet are pacing o'er the green,
"The mind is gone where never grass was seen,
"And never thinks of hill, or vale, or plain,
"Till want of rest creates a sense of pain,
"That calls that wandering mind, and brings it home again.

"But now farewell! to thee will I resign
"Woods, walks, and valleys! take them till we dine."

The Brothers dined, and with that plenteous fare
That seldom fails to dissipate our care,
At least the lighter kind; and oft prevails
When reason, duty, nay, when kindness fails.

RICHARD'S BOYHOOD *

LEFT by that father, who was known to few,
And to that mother, who has not her due
Of honest fame (said Richard), our retreat
Was a small cottage, for our station meet,
On Barford Downs: that mother, fond and poor,
There taught some truths, and bade me seek for more,
Such as our village-school and books a few
Supplied; but such I cared not to pursue;
I sought the town, and to the ocean gave
My mind and thoughts, as restless as the wave:
Where crowds assembled, I was sure to run,
Heard what was said, and mused on what was done;
Attentive listening in the moving scene,
And often wondering what the men could mean.
When ships at sea made signals of their need,
I watch'd on shore the sailors, and their speed:
Mix'd in their act, nor rested till I knew
Why they were call'd, and what they were to do.

No ships were wreck'd upon that fatal beach,
But I could give the luckless tale of each;

* Richard, after dinner, at his brother's request, describes part of his life.

HOUSE OF CRABBE'S FATHER, AT ALDBOROUGH.

Eager I look'd, till I beheld a face
Of one disposed to paint their dismal case;
Who gave the sad survivors' doleful tale,
From the first brushing of the mighty gale
Until they struck; and, suffering in their fate,
I long'd the more they should its horrors state.

To me the wives of seamen loved to tell
What storms endangered men esteemed so well,
There were fond girls, who took me to their side
To tell the story how their lovers died;
They praised my tender heart, and bade me prove
Both kind and constant when I came to love;
With pain my mother would my tales receive,
And say, "My Richard! do not learn to grieve."

I sought the men returned from regions cold,
The frozen straits, where icy mountains roll'd;
Some I could win to tell me serious tales
Of boats uplifted by enormous whales,
Or, when harpoon'd, how swiftly through the sea
The wounded monsters with the cordage flee.

They told of days, where many go to one —
Such days as ours; and how a larger sun,
Red, but not flaming, roll'd, with motion slow,
On the world's edge, but never dropp'd below.

I often rambled to the noisy quay,
Strange sounds to hear, and business strange to me;
Seamen and carmen, and I know not who,
A lewd, amphibious, rude, contentious crew—

Confused as bees appear about their hive,
Yet all alert to keep their work alive.

I saw their tasks, their toil, their care, their skill,
Led by their own and by a master-will;
And though contending, toiling, tugging on,
The purposed business of the day was done.

The open shops of craftsmen caught my eye,
And there my questions met the kind reply:
Men, when alone, will teach; but, in a crowd,
The child is silent, or the man is proud;
But, by themselves, there is attention paid
To a mild boy, so forward, yet afraid.

I made me interest at the inn's fireside,
Amid the scenes to bolder boys denied;
For I had patrons there, and I was one,
They judged, who noticed nothing that was done.
"A quiet lad!" would my protector say;
"To him, now, this is better than his play:
"Boys are as men; some active, shrewd, and keen,
"They look about if aught is to be seen;
"And some, like Richard here, have not a mind
"That takes a notice—but the lad is kind."

I loved in summer on the heath to walk,
And seek the shepherd—shepherds love to talk:
His superstition was of ranker kind,
And he with tales of wonder stored my mind;
Wonders that he in many a lonely eve
Had seen, himself, and therefore must believe.

His boy, his Joe, he said, from duty ran,
Took to the sea, and grew a fearless man:
"On yonder knoll—the sheep were in the fold—
"His spirit pass'd me, shivering-like and cold!
"I felt a fluttering, but I knew not how,
"And heard him utter, like a whisper, 'Now!'
"Soon came a letter from a friend—to tell
"That he had fallen, and the time he fell."

Even to the smugglers' hut the rocks between,
I have, adventurous in my wandering, been:
Poor, pious Martha served the lawless tribe,
And could their merits and their faults describe;
Adding her thoughts; "I talk, my child, to you,
"Who little think of what such wretches do."

I loved to walk where none had walk'd before,
About the rocks that ran along the shore;
Or far beyond the sight of men to stray,
And take my pleasure when I lost my way;
For then 'twas mine to trace the hilly heath,
And all the mossy moor that lies beneath:
Here had I favourite stations, where I stood
And heard the murmurs of the ocean-flood,
With not a sound beside, except when flew
Aloft the lapwing, or the grey curlew,
Who with wild notes my fancied power defied,
And mock'd the dreams of solitary pride.

I loved to stop at every creek and bay
Made by the river in its winding way,
And call to memory—not by marks they bare,
But by the thoughts that were created there.

Pleasant it was to view the sea-gulls strive
Against the storm, or in the ocean dive,
With eager scream, or when they dropping gave
Their closing wings to sail upon the wave:
Then as the winds and waters raged around,
And breaking billows mix'd their deafening sound,
They on the rolling deep securely hung,
And calmly rode the restless waves among.
Nor pleased it less around me to behold,
Far up the beach, the yeasty sea-foam roll'd;
Or from the shore upborne, to see on high,
Its frothy flakes in wild confusion fly:
While the salt spray that clashing billows form,
Gave to the taste a feeling of the storm.

But now thy walk,—this soft autumnal gloom
Bids no delay—at night I will resume
My subject, showing, not how I improved
In my strange school, but what the things I loved,
My first-born friendships, ties by forms uncheck'd,
And all that boys acquire whom men neglect.

RUTH *

SOUTH in the port, and eastward in the street,
Rose a small dwelling, my beloved retreat,
Where lived a pair, then old; the sons had fled
The home they fill'd: a part of them were dead;
Married a part; while some at sea remain'd,
And stillness in the seaman's mansion reign'd;
Lord of some petty craft, by night and day,
The man had fish'd each fathom of the bay.

My friend the matron woo'd me, quickly won,
To fill the station of an absent son;
She grieved to say her parents could neglect
Her education!—'twas a sore defect;
She, who had ever such a vast delight
To learn, and now could neither read nor write:
But hear she could, and from our stores I took,
Librarian meet! at her desire, our book.

Full twenty volumes—I would not exceed
The modest truth—were there for me to read;
These a long shelf contain'd, and they were found
Books truly speaking, volumes fairly bound;

* Richard relates this recollection of his boyhood when the brothers meet over the fire at night.

The rest,—for some of other kinds remain'd,
And these a board beneath the shelf contain'd—
Had their deficiencies in part; they lack'd
One side or both, or were no longer back'd;
But now became degraded from their place,
And were but pamphlets of a bulkier race.
Yet had we pamphlets, an inviting store,
From sixpence downwards — nay, a part were more;
A piece of Wingate—thanks for all we have—
What we of figures needed, fully gave;
Culpepper, new in numbers, cost but thrice
The ancient volume's unassuming price,
But told what planet o'er each herb had power,
And how to take it in the lucky hour.

History we had—wars, treasons, treaties, crimes,
From Julius Cæsar to the present times;
Questions and answers, teaching what to ask
And what reply,—a kind, laborious task:
A scholar's book it was, who, giving, swore
It held the whole he wish'd to know, and more.
And we had poets, hymns and songs divine;
The most we read not, but allow'd them fine.

Our tracts were many, on the boldest themes—
We had our metaphysics, spirits, dreams,
Visions and warnings, and portentous sights
Seen, though but dimly, in the doleful nights,
When the good wife her wint'ry vigil keeps,
And thinks alone of him at sea, and weeps.

Add to all these our works in single sheets,
That our Cassandras sing about the streets:
These, as I read, the grave good man would say,
"Nay, Hannah!" and she answer'd, "What is Nay?
"What is there, pray, so hurtful in a song?
"It is our fancy only makes it wrong;
"His purer mind no evil thoughts alarm,
"And innocence protects him like a charm."
Then would the matron, when the song had pass'd,
And her laugh over, ask a hymn at last.

When I had read, and we were weary grown
Of other minds, the dame disclosed her own;
I could perceive, though Hannah bore full well
The ills of life, that few with her would dwell,
But pass away, like shadows o'er the plain
From flying clouds, and leave it fair again;
Still every evil, be it great or small,
Would one past sorrow to the mind recall,
The grand disease of life, to which she turns,
And common cares and lighter suffering spurns.
"O! these are nothing,—they will never heed
"Such idle contests, who have fought indeed,
"And have the wounds unclosed."—I understood
My hint to speak, and my design pursued,
Curious the secret of that heart to find,
To mirth, to song, to laughter loud inclined,
And yet to bear and feel a weight of grief behind:
How does she thus her little sunshine throw
Always before her?—I should like to know.

My friend perceived, and would no longer hide
The bosom's sorrow—Could she not confide
In one who wept, unhurt—in one who felt, untried?

"Dear child, I show you sins and sufferings strange,
"But you, like Adam, must for knowledge change
"That blissful ignorance: remember, then,
"What now you feel should be a check on men;
"For then your passions no debate allow,
"And therefore lay up resolution now.
"'Tis not enough, that when you can persuade
"A maid to love, you know there's promise made;
"'Tis not enough, that you *design* to keep
"That promise made, nor leave your lass to weep,
"For *he* had truth with love; but love in youth
"Does wrong, that cannot be repaired with truth.

"Ruth—I may tell, too oft had she been told—
"Was tall and fair, and comely to behold,
"Gentle and simple, in her native place
"Not one compared with her in form or face;
"She was not merry, but she gave our hearth
"A cheerful spirit that was more than mirth.

"There was a sailor boy, and people said
"He was, as man, a likeness of the maid;
"But not in this—for he was ever glad,
"While Ruth was apprehensive, mild, and sad;
"A quiet spirit hers, and peace would seek
"In meditation: tender, mild, and meek!

"Her loved the lad most truly; and, in truth,
"She took an early liking to the youth:
"To her alone were his attentions paid,
"And they became the bachelor and maid.
"He wish'd to marry, but so prudent we
"And worldly wise, we said it could not be:
"They took the counsel,—maybe they approved,—
"But still they grieved and waited, hoped and loved.

"Now, my young friend, when of such state I speak
"As one of danger, you will be to seek;
"You know not, Richard, where the danger lies
"In loving hearts, kind words, and speaking eyes;
"For lovers speak their wishes with their looks
"As plainly, love, as you can read your books.
"Then, too, the meetings and the partings, all
"The playful quarrels in which lovers fall,
"Serve to one end—each lover is a child,
"Quick to resent and to be reconciled;
"And that brings kindness — and what kindness brings
"I cannot tell you: these were trying things.
"They were as children, and they fell at length;
"The trial, doubtless, was beyond their strength;
"Then they would marry,—but were now too late,—
"All could their fault in sport or malice state;
"And though the day was fix'd and now drew on,
"I could perceive my daughter's peace was gone;
"She could not bear the bold and laughing eye
"That gazed on her—reproach she could not fly;
"Her grief she would not show, her shame could not deny:

"For some with many virtues come to shame,
"And some that lose them all preserve their name.

"Fix'd was the day; but ere that day appear'd,
"A frightful rumour through the place was heard;
"War, who had slept awhile, awaked once more,
"And gangs came pressing till they swept the shore:
"Our youth was seized and quickly sent away,
"Nor would the wretches for his marriage stay,
"There were wives, maids, and mothers on the beach,
"And some sad story appertain'd to each;
"Most sad to Ruth—to neither could she go!
"But sat apart, and suffer'd matchless woe!
"On the vile ship they turn'd their earnest view,
"Not one last look allow'd,—not one adieu!
"They saw the men on deck, but none distinctly knew.
"And there she stay'd, regardless of each eye,
"With but one hope, a fervent hope to die:
"Nor cared she now for kindness—all beheld
"Her, who invited none, and none repell'd;
"For there are griefs, my child, that sufferers hide,
"And there are griefs that men display with pride;
"But there are other griefs that, so we feel,
"We care not to display them nor conceal:
"A single day had Thomas stay'd on shore
"He might have wedded, and we ask'd no more;
"And that stern man, who forced the lad away,
"Might have attended, and have graced the day;

"But this he would not.—Child, there's none regard
"What you and I conceive so cruel-hard:
"There is compassion, I believe; but still
"One wants the power to help, and one the will,
"And so from war to war the wrongs remain,
"While Reason pleads, and Misery sighs in vain.

"Thus my poor Ruth was wretched and undone,
"Nor had a husband for her only son,
"Nor had he father; hope she did awhile,
"And would not weep, although she could not smile;
"Till news was brought us that the youth was slain,
"And then, I think, she never smiled again;
"Or if she did, it was but to express
"A feeling far, indeed, from happiness!
"Something that her bewilder'd mind conceived:
"When she inform'd us that she never grieved,
"But was right merry, then her head was wild,
"And grief had gain'd possession of my child:
"Yet though bewilder'd for a time, and prone
"To ramble much and speak aloud, alone;
"Yet did she all that duty ever ask'd,
"And more, her will self-govern'd and untask'd:
"With meekness bearing all reproach, all joy
"To her was lost; she wept upon her boy,
"Wish'd for his death, in fear that he might live
"New sorrow to a burden'd heart to give.

"There was a Teacher, where my husband went—
"*Sent*, as he told the people—what he meant
"You cannot understand, but—he was sent:

"This man from meeting came, and strove to win
"Her mind to peace by drawing off the sin,
"Or what it was, that, working in her breast,
"Robb'd it of comfort, confidence, and rest:
"He came and reason'd, and she seem'd to feel
"The pains he took—her griefs began to heal;
"She ever answer'd kindly when he spoke,
"And always thank'd him for the pains he took;
"So, after three long years, and all the while
"Wrapt up in grief, she bless'd us with a smile,
"And spoke in comfort; but she mix'd no more
"With younger persons, as she did before.

"Still Ruth was pretty; in her person neat;
"So thought the Teacher, when they chanced to meet:
"He was a weaver by his worldly trade
"But powerful work in the assemblies made;
"People came leagues to town to hear him sift
"The holy text,—he had the grace and gift;
"Widows and maidens flock'd to hear his voice;
"Of either kind he might have had his choice;—
"But he had chosen—we had seen how shy
"The girl was getting, my good man and I:
"That when the weaver came, she kept with us,
"Where he his points and doctrines might discuss;
"But in our bit of garden, or the room
"We call our parlour, there he must not come:
"She loved him not, and though she could attend
"To his discourses, as her guide and friend,
"Yet now to these she gave a listless ear,
"As if a friend she would no longer hear;

"This might he take for woman's art, and cried,
"'Spouse of my heart, I must not be denied!'—
"Fearless he spoke, and I had hope to see
"My girl a wife—but this was not to be.

"My husband, thinking of his worldly store,
"And not, frail man, enduring to be poor,
"Seeing his friend would for his child provide
"And hers, he grieved to have the man denied;
"For Ruth, when press'd, rejected him, and grew
"To her old sorrow, as if that were new.
"'Who shall support her?' said her father, 'how
"'Can I, infirm and weak as I am now?
"'And here a loving fool'——this gave her pain,
"Severe, indeed, but she would not complain:
"Nor would consent, although the weaver grew
"More fond, and would the frighten'd girl pursue.

"Oh! much she begg'd him to forbear, to stand
"Her soul's kind friend, and not to ask her hand:
"She could not love him.—'Love me!' he replied,
"'The love you mean is love unsanctified,
"'An earthly, wicked, sensual, sinful kind,
"'A creature-love, the passion of the blind.'
"He did not court her, he would have her know,
"For that poor love that will on beauty grow
"No! he would take her as the Prophet took
"One of the harlots in the holy book;
"And then he look'd so ugly and severe!
"And yet so fond—she could not hide her fear.

"This fondness grew her torment; she would fly,
"In woman's terror, if he came but nigh;

"Nor could I wonder he should odious prove,
"So like a ghost that left a grave for love.

"But still her father lent his cruel aid
"To the man's hope, and she was more afraid:
"He said no more she should his table share,
"But be the parish or the Teacher's care.
"'Three days I give you: see that all be right
"'On Monday morning—this is Thursday night—
"'Fulfil my wishes, girl! or else forsake my sight!'

"I see her now; and, she that was so meek,
"It was a chance that she had power to speak,
"Now spoke in earnest—'Father! I obey,
"'And will remember the appointed day!'

"Then came the man: she talk'd with him apart,
"And, I believe, laid open all her heart;
"But all in vain—she said to me, in tears,
"'Mother! that man is not what he appears:
"'He talks of heaven, and let him, if he will,
"'But he has earthly purpose to fulfil;
"'Upon my knees I begg'd him to resign
"'The hand he asks—he said, "It shall be mine:
"'"What! did the holy men of Scripture deign
"'"To hear a woman when she said 'refrain?
"'"Of whom they chose they took them wives, and these
"'"Made it their study and their wish to please;
"'"The women then were faithful and afraid,
"'"As Sarah Abraham, they their lords obey'd,

"'"And so she styled him; 'tis in later days
"'"Of foolish love that we our women praise,
"'"Fall on the knee, and raise the suppliant hand,
"'"And court the favour that we might command."

"'O! my dear mother, when this man has power,
"'How will he treat me—first may beasts devour!
"'Or death in every form that I could prove,
"'Except this selfish being's hateful love.'

"I gently blamed her, for I knew how hard
"It is to force affection and regard.

"Ah! my dear lad, I talk to you as one
"Who know the misery of a heart undone:
"You know it not; but, dearest boy, when man,
"Do not an ill because you find you can:
"Where is the triumph? when such things men seek,
"They only drive to wickedness the weak.

"Weak was poor Ruth, and this good man so hard,
"That to her weakness he had no regard:
"But we had two days' peace; he came, and then,
"My daughter whisper'd, 'Would there were no men!
"'None to admire or scorn us, none to vex
"'A simple, trusting, fond, believing sex;
"'Who truly love the worth that men profess,
"'And think too kindly for their happiness.'

"If Ruth was frail, she had a mind too nice
"To wed with that which she beheld as vice:

"To take a reptile, who, beneath a show
"Of peevish zeal, let carnal wishes grow;
"Proud and yet mean, forbidding and yet full
"Of eager appetites, devout and dull,
"Waiting a legal rite that he might seize
"His own, and his impatient spirit ease,
"Who would at once his pride and love indulge,
"His temper humour, and his spite divulge.
"This the poor victim saw—a second time,
"Sighing, she said, 'Shall I commit the crime,
"'And now untempted? Can the form or rite
"'Make me a wife in my Creator's sight?
"'Can I the words without a meaning say?
"'Can I pronounce love, honour, or obey?
"'And if I cannot, shall I dare to wed,
"'And go a harlot to a loathed bed?'

"No hapless victim of a tyrant's love
"More keenly felt, or more resisting strove
"Against her fate; she look'd on every side,
"But there were none to help her, none to guide;—
"And he, the man who should have taught the soul,
"Wish'd but the body in his base control.

"She left her infant on the Sunday morn,
"A creature doom'd to shame! in sorrow born:
"A thing that languish'd, nor arrived at age
"When the man's thoughts with sin and pain engage—
"She came not home to share our humble meal,
"Her father thinking what his child would feel

"From his hard sentence—still she came not home.
"The night grew dark, and yet she was not come;
"The east wind roar'd, the sea return'd the sound,
"And the rain fell as if the world were drown'd:
"There were no lights without, and my good man,
"To kindness frighten'd, with a groan began
"To talk of Ruth, and pray; and then he took
"The Bible down, and read the holy book;
"For he had learning: and when that was done
"We sat in silence—whither could we run?
"We said, and then rush'd frighten'd from the door,
"For we could bear our own conceit no more:
"We call'd on neighbours—there she had not been;
"We met some wanderers—ours they had not seen;
"We hurried o'er the beach, both north and south,
"Then join'd, and wander'd to our haven's mouth:
"Where rush'd the falling waters wildly out,
"I scarcely heard the good man's fearful shout,
"Who saw a something on the billow ride,
"And—'Heaven have mercy on our sins!' he cried,
"'It is my child!'—and to the present hour
"So he believes—and spirits have the power.

"And she was gone! the waters wide and deep
"Roll'd o'er her body as she lay asleep.
"She heard no more the angry waves and wind,
"She heard no more the threat'ning of mankind;
"Wrapt in dark weeds, the refuse of the storm,
"To the hard rock was borne her comely form!

"But oh! what storm was in that mind! what strife,
"That could compel her to lay down her life!
"For she was seen within the sea to wade,
"By one at distance, when she first had pray'd;
"Then to a rock within the hither shoal
"Softly and with a fearful step she stole;
"Then, when she gain'd it, on the top she stood
"A moment still—and dropp'd into the flood!
"The man cried loudly, but he cried in vain,—
"She heard not then—she never heard again!
"She had—pray, Heav'n!—she had that world in sight,
"Where frailty mercy finds, and wrong has right;
"But, sure, in this her portion such has been,
"Well had it still remain'd a world unseen!"

RICHARD'S WOOING

THIS then, dear Richard, was the way you took
"To gain instruction—thine a curious book,
"Containing much of both the false and true;
"But thou hast read it, and with profit too.

"Come, then, my Brother, now thy tale complete—
"I know thy first embarking in the fleet,
"Thy entrance in the army, and thy gain
"Of plenteous laurels in the wars of Spain,
"And what then follow'd; but I wish to know
"When thou that heart hadst courage to bestow,
"When to declare it gain'd, and when to stand
"Before the priest, and give the plighted hand;
"So shall I boldness from thy frankness gain
"To paint the frenzy that possess'd my brain;
"For rather there than in my heart I found
"Was my disease; a poison, not a wound,
"A madness, Richard—but, I pray thee, tell
"Whom hast thou loved so dearly and so well?"

The younger man his gentle host obey'd,
For some respect, though not required, was paid,
Perhaps with all that independent pride
Their different states would to the memory glide;

Yet was his manner unrestrain'd and free,
And nothing in it like servility.

Then he began :—When first I reach'd the land,
I was so ill that death appear'd at hand ;
And though the fever left me, yet I grew
So weak 'twas judged that life would leave me too.
I sought a village-priest, my mother's friend,
And I believed with him my days would end :
The man was kind, intelligent, and mild,
Careless and shrewd, yet simple as the child ;
For of the wisdom of the world his share
And mine were equal—neither had to spare ;
Else—with his daughters, beautiful and poor—
He would have kept a sailor from his door :
Two then were present, who adorn'd his home,
But ever speaking of a third to come ;
Cheerful they were, not too reserved or free,
I loved them both, and never wish'd them three.

The Vicar's self, still further to describe,
Was of a simple, but a studious tribe ;
He from the world was distant, not retired,
Nor of it much possess'd, nor much desired :
Grave in his purpose, cheerful in his eye,
And with a look of frank benignity.
He much of nature, not of man had seen,
Yet his remarks were often shrewd and keen ;
Taught not by books t' approve or to condemn,
He gain'd but little that he knew from them ;
He read with reverence and respect the few
Whence he his rules and consolations drew

But men and beasts, and all that lived or moved,
Were books to him; he studied them and loved.
He knew the plants in mountain, wood, or mead;
He knew the worms that on the foliage feed;
Knew the small tribes that 'scape the careless eye,
The plant's disease that breeds the embryo-fly;
And the small creatures who on bark or bough
Enjoy their changes, changed we know not how;
But now th' imperfect being scarcely moves,
And now takes wing and seeks the sky it loves.

He had no system, and forbore to read
The learned labours of th' immortal Swede;
But smiled to hear the creatures he had known
So long, were now in class and order shown,
Genus and species—"Is it meet," said he,
"'This creature's name should one so sounding be?
"'Tis but a fly, though first-born of the spring—
"Bombylius majus, dost thou call the thing?
"Majus, indeed! and yet, in fact, 'tis true,
"We all are majors, all are minors too,
"Except the first and last,—th' immensely distant two.
"And here again,—what call the learned this?
"Both Hippobosca * and Hirundinis?
"Methinks the creature should be proud to find
"That he employs the talents of mankind;
"And that his sovereign master shrewdly looks,
"Counts all his parts, and puts them in his books.
"Well! go thy way, for I do feel it shame
"To stay a being with so proud a name."

* The horse-fly.

Such were his daughters, such my quiet friend,
And pleasant was it thus my days to spend;
But when Matilda at her home I saw,
Whom I beheld with anxiousness and awe,
The ease and quiet that I found before
At once departed, and return'd no more.
No more their music soothed me as they play'd,
But soon her words a strong impression made;
The sweet Enthusiast, so I deem'd her, took
My mind, and fix'd it to her speech and look;
My soul, dear girl! she made her constant care,
But never whisper'd to my heart "Beware!"
In love no dangers rise till we are in the snare.

Her father sometimes question'd of my creed,
And seem'd to think it might amendment need;
But great the difference when the pious maid
To the same errors her attention paid;
Her sole design that I should think aright,
And my conversion her supreme delight:
Pure was her mind, and simple her intent,
Good all she sought, and kindness all she meant.
Next to religion, friendship was our theme,
Related souls and their refined esteem:
We talk'd of scenes where this is real found,
And love subsists without a dart or wound;
But there intruded thoughts not all serene,
And wishes not so calm would intervene.

"Saw not her father?"

Yes; but saw no more
Than he had seen without a fear before:

He had subsisted by the church and plough,
And saw no cause for apprehension now.
We, too, could live: he thought not passion wrong,
But only wonder'd we delay'd so long.

Laugh, if you please, I must my tale pursue—
This sacred friendship thus in secret grew
An intellectual love, most tender, chaste, and true:
Unstain'd, we said, nor knew we how it chanced
To gain some earthly soil as it advanced;
But yet my friend, and she alone, could prove
How much it differ'd from romantic love—
But this and more I pass—No doubt, at length,
We could perceive the weakness of our strength.

O! days remember'd well! remember'd all!
The bitter-sweet, the honey and the gall;
Those garden rambles in the silent night,
Those trees so shady, and that moon so bright;
That thickset alley by the arbour closed,
That woodbine seat where we at last reposed;
And then the hopes that came and then were gone,
Quick as the clouds beneath the moon pass'd on:
Now, in this instant, shall my love be shown,
I said—O no, the happy time is flown!

You smile: remember, I was weak and low,
And fear'd the passion as I felt it grow:
Will she, I said, to one so poor attend,
Without a prospect, and without a friend?
I dared not ask her—till a rival came—
But hid the secret, slow-consuming flame.

I once had seen him; then familiar, free,
More than became a common guest to be;
And sure, I said, he has a look of pride
And inward joy,—a lover satisfied.

Can you not, Brother, on adventures past,
A thought, as on a lively prospect, cast?
On days of dear remembrance! days that seem,
When past—nay, even when present, like a dream—
These white and blessed days, that softly shine
On few, nor oft on them—have they been thine?

Such days have been—a day of days was one
When, rising gaily with the rising sun,
I took my way to join a happy few,
Known not to me, but whom Matilda knew,
To whom she went a guest, and message sent,
"Come thou to us," and as a guest I went.

There are two ways to Brandon—by the heath
Above the cliff, or on the sand beneath,
Where the small pebbles, wetted by the wave,
To the new day reflected lustre gave:
At first above the rocks I made my way,
Delighted looking at the spacious bay,
And the large fleet that to the northward steer
Full sail, that glorious in my view appear'd.

Much as I long'd to see the maid I loved,
Through scenes so glorious I at leisure moved;
For there are times when we do not obey
The master-passion—when we yet delay—

When absence, soon to end, we yet prolong,
And dally with our wish although so strong.

High beat my heart when to the house I came,
And when the ready servant gave my name;
But when I enter'd that pernicious room,
Gloomy it look'd, and painful was the gloom;
For there Matilda sat, and her beside
That rival soldier, with a soldier's pride;
With self-approval in his laughing face,
His seem'd the leading spirit of the place:
But, lo! they rise, and all prepare to take
The promised pleasure on the neighbouring lake

Good Heaven! they whisper! Is it come to this?
Already!—then may I my doubt dismiss:
Could he so soon a timid girl persuade?
What rapid progress has the coxcomb made!
And yet how cool her looks, and how demure!
The falling snow nor lily's flower so pure:
What can I do? I must the pair attend,
And watch this horrid business to its end.
There, forth they go! He leads her to the shore—
Nay, I must follow,—I can bear no more.

O! you will make me room—'tis very kind,
And meant for him—it tells him he must mind;
Must not be careless:—I can serve to draw
The soldier on, and keep the man in awe.
O! I did think she had a guileless heart,
Without deceit, capriciousness, or art;
And yet a stranger, with a coat of red,
Has, by an hour's attention, turn'd her head.

Ah! how delicious was the morning-drive,
The soul awaken'd, and its hopes alive:
How dull this scene by trifling minds enjoy'd,
The heart in trouble and its hope destroy'd.

Well, now we land—And will he yet support
This part? What favour has he now to court?
Favour! O no! He means to quit the fair;
How strange! how cruel! Will she not despair?
Well! take her hand—no further if you please,
I cannot suffer fooleries like these:—
How? "Love to Julia!" to his wife?—O! dear
And injured creature, how must I appear,
Thus haughty in my looks, and in my words severe?
Her love to Julia, to the school-day friend
To whom those letters she has lately penn'd!
Can she forgive? And now I think again,
The man was neither insolent nor vain;
Good humour chiefly would a stranger trace,
Were he impartial, in the air or face;
And I so splenetic the whole way long,
And she so patient—it was very wrong.

The boat had landed in a shady scene;
The grove was in its glory, fresh and green;
The showers of late had swell'd the branch and bough,
And the sun's fervour made them pleasant now.
Hard by an oak arose in all its pride,
And threw its arms along the water's side;
Its leafy limbs, that on the glassy lake
Stretch far, and all those dancing shadows make.

Now must we cross the lake, and as we cross'd
Was my whole soul in sweet emotion lost;
Clouds in white volumes roll'd beneath the moon,
Softening her light that on the waters shone:
This was such bliss! even then it seem'd relief
To veil the gladness in a show of grief:
We sigh'd as we conversed, and said, how deep
This lake on which those broad dark shadows sleep;
But here we land, and haply now may choose
Companions home—our way, too, we may lose.

. . . . . .

All thought, yet thinking nothing—all delight
In everything, but nothing in my sight!
Nothing I mark or learn, but am possess'd
Of joys I cannot paint, and I am bless'd
In all that I conceive—whatever is, is best.
Ready to aid all beings, I would go
The world around to succour human woe;
Yet am so largely happy, that it seems
There are no woes, and sorrows are but dreams.

There is a college joy, to scholars known,
When the first honours are proclaim'd their own;
There is ambition's joy, when in their race
A man surpassing rivals gains his place;
There is a beauty's joy, amid a crowd
To have that beauty her first fame allow'd;
And there's the conqueror's joy, when, dubious held
And long the fight, he sees the foe repell'd:

But what are these, or what are other joys,
That charm kings, conquerors, beauteous nymphs and boys,
Or greater yet, if greater yet be found,
To that delight when love's dear hope is crown'd?
To the first beating of a lover's heart,
When the loved maid endeavours to impart,
Frankly yet faintly, fondly yet in fear,
The kind confession that he holds so dear.
Now in the morn of our return how strange
Was this new feeling, this delicious change;
That sweet delirium, when I gazed in fear,
That all would yet be lost and disappear.

Such was the blessing that I sought for pain
In some degree to be myself again;
And when we met a shepherd old and lame,
Cold and diseased, it seem'd my blood to tame;
And I was thankful for the moral sight,
That soberised the vast and wild delight.

THE SQUIRE'S LOVE-STORY*

YES, my dear Richard, thou shalt hear me own
Follies and frailties thou hast never known;
Thine was a frailty,—folly, if you please,—
But mine a flight, a madness, a disease.

Turn with me to my twentieth year, for then
The lover's frenzy ruled the poet's pen;
I built me castles wondrous rich and rare,
Few castle-builders could with me compare;
The hall, the palace, rose at my command,
And these I fill'd with objects great and grand.
Virtues sublime, that nowhere else would live,
Glory and pomp, that I alone could give;
Trophies and thrones by matchless valour gain'd,
Faith unreproved, and chastity unstain'd;
With all that soothes the sense and charms the soul,
Came at my call, and were in my control.

"Give me," I cried, "a beauty; none on earth
"Of higher rank or nobler in her birth;
"Pride of her race, her father's hope and care,
"Yet meek as children of the cottage are;

* In return for Richard's account of his life, George, the elder brother, tells this tale of his own.

"Nursed in the court, and there by love pursued,
"But fond of peace, and blest in solitude;
"By rivals honour'd, and by beauties praised,
"Yet all unconscious of the envy raised."

This was my dream.—In some auspicious hour,
In some sweet solitude, in some green bower,
Whither my fate should lead me, there, unseen,
I should behold my fancy's gracious queen,
Singing sweet song! that I should hear awhile,
Then catch the transient glory of a smile;
Then at her feet with trembling hope should kneel,
Such as rapt saints and raptured lovers feel;
To watch the chaste unfoldings of her heart,
In joy to meet, in agony to part,
And then in tender song to soothe my grief,
And hail, in glorious rhyme, my *Lady of the Leaf*.

To dream these dreams I chose a woody scene,
My guardian shade, the world and me between;
A green enclosure, where beside its bound
A thorny fence beset its beauties round,
Save where some creature's force had made a way
For me to pass, and in my kingdom stray:
Here then I stray'd, then sat me down to call,
Just as I will'd, my shadowy subjects all!
Fruits of all minds conceived on every coast,
Fay, witch, enchanter, devil, demon, ghost;
And thus with knights and nymphs, in halls and bowers,
In war and love, I pass'd unnumber'd hours.

Yet in this world there was a single scene,
That I allow'd with mine to intervene;
This house, where never yet my feet had stray'd,
I with respect and timid awe survey'd;
With pleasing wonder I have ofttimes stood,
To view these turrets rising o'er the wood;
When Fancy to the halls and chambers flew,
Large, solemn, silent, that I must not view;
The moat was then, and then o'er all the ground
Tall elms and ancient oaks stretch'd far around;
And where the soil forbade the nobler race,
Dwarf trees and humbler shrubs had found their place,
Forbidding man in their close hold to go,
Haw, gatter, holm, the service and the sloe;
With tangling weeds that at the bottom grew,
And climbers all above their feathery branches threw.
Nor path of man or beast was there espied,
But there the birds of darkness loved to hide,
The loathed toad to lodge, and speckled snake to glide.

With all these flights and fancies, then so dear,
I reach'd the birthday of my twentieth year;
And in the evening of a day in June
Was singing —as I sang—some heavenly tune;
My native tone, indeed, was harsh and hoarse,
But he who feels such powers can sing of course.

So was I singing, when I saw descend,
From this old seat a lady and her friend;

I saw them ere they came, myself unseen,
My lofty fence and thorny bound between—
And one alone, one matchless face I saw,
And, though at distance, felt delight and awe:
Fancy and truth adorn'd her; fancy gave
Much, but not all; truth help'd to make their slave;
For she was lovely,—all was not the vain
Or sickly homage of a fever'd brain;
No! she had beauty, such as they admire
Whose hope is earthly, and whose love desire.

Their dress was such as well became the place,
But One superior; hers the air, the grace,
The condescending looks, that spoke the nobler race.
Slender she was and tall: her fairy feet
Bore her right onward to my shady seat;
And Oh! I sigh'd that she would nobly dare
To come, nor let her friend the adventure share.

And I was musing—How shall I begin?
How make approach my unknown way to win,
And to that heart, as yet untouch'd, make known
The wound, the wish, the weakness of my own?
Such is my part, but—— Mercy! what alarm?
Dare aught on earth that sovereign beauty harm?

It soon appear'd, that while this nymph divine
Moved on, there met her rude uncivil kine.
As feeling prompted, to the place I ran,
Resolved to save the maids and show the man:

My sovereign beauty with amazement saw—
So she declared—the horrid things in awe;
Well pleased, she witness'd what respect was paid
By such brute natures—Every cow afraid,
And kept at distance by the powers of one,
Who had to her a dangerous service done.

So thought the maid, who now, beyond the stile,
Received her champion with a gracious smile;
It spoke, as plainly as a smile can speak,
"Seek whom you love, love freely whom you seek."

Thus, when the lovely witch had wrought her charm,
She took th' attendant maiden by the arm,
And left me fondly gazing, till no more
I could the shade of that dear form explore;
Then to my secret haunt I turn'd again,
Fire in my heart, and fever in my brain;
That face of her for ever in my view,
Whom I was henceforth fated to pursue,
To hope I knew not what, small hope in what I knew.

O! my dear Richard, what a waste of time
Gave I not thus to lunacy sublime;
What days, months, years, (to useful purpose lost)
Has not this dire infatuation cost?
Yet let me own that as my soul it drew
From Reason's path, it shunn'd Dishonour's too;
It made my taste refined, my feelings nice,
And placed an angel in the way of vice.

Such, my dear Richard, was my early flame,
My youthful frenzy—give it either name;
It was the withering bane of many a year,
That pass'd away in causeless hope and fear;
The hopes, the fears, that every dream could kill,
Or make alive, and lead my passive will.

My thrifty uncle, now return'd, began
To stir within me what remain'd of man;
My powerful frenzy painted to the life,
And ask'd me if I took a dream to wife?
Debate ensued, and so affection wrought,
That he to save me from destruction sought:
To him destruction, the most awful curse
Of Misery's children, was—an empty purse!
He his own books approved, and thought the pen
A useful instrument for trading men;
But judged a quill was never to be slit
Except to make it for a merchant fit:
He, when inform'd how men of taste could write,
Look'd on his ledger with supreme delight;
Then would he laugh, and, with insulting joy,
Tell me aloud, "That's poetry, my boy;
"Sir, when a man composes in this style,
"What is to him a critic's frown or smile?
"What is the puppy's censure or applause
"To the good man who on his banker draws,
"Buys an estate, and writes upon the grounds,
"'Pay to A. B. a hundred thousand pounds?'"

Some months I suffer'd thus, compell'd to sit
And hear a wealthy kinsman aim at wit;

Yet there was something in his nature good,
And he had feeling for the tie of blood:
So while I languish'd for my absent maid
I some observance to my uncle paid.

"Had you inquired?" said Richard.

I had placed
Inquirers round, but nothing could be traced;
Of every reasoning creature at this Hall,
And tenant near it, I applied to all——
Tell me if she—and I described her well—
Dwelt long a guest, or where retired to dwell?
But no! such lady they remember'd not—
They saw that face, strange beings! and forgot.

Nor was inquiry all; but I pursued
My soul's first wish, with hope's vast strength endued:
I cross'd the seas, I went where strangers go,
And gazed on crowds as one who dreads a foe,
Or seeks a friend; and, when I sought in vain,
Fled to fresh crowds, and hoped, and gazed again.

"It was a strong possession"—Strong and strange,
I felt the evil, yet desired not change:
Years now had flown, nor was the passion cured,
But hope had life, and so was life endured;
The mind's disease, with all its strength, stole on,
Till youth, and health, and all but love were gone.
And there were seasons, Richard, horrid hours
Of mental suffering! they o'erthrew my powers,
And made my mind unsteady—I have still,
At times, a feeling of that nameless ill,

That is not madness—I could always tell
My mind was wandering—knew it was not well;
Felt all my loss of time, the shameful waste
Of talents perish'd, and of parts disgraced:
But though my mind was sane, there was a void—
My understanding seem'd in part destroy'd.

While in this state, once more my uncle pray'd
That I would hear—I heard, and I obey'd;
For I was thankful that a being broke
On this my sadness, or an interest took
In my poor life—but, at his mansion, rest
Came with its halcyon stillness to my breast:
Slowly there enter'd in my mind concern
For things about me—I would something learn,
And to my uncle listen; who, with joy,
Found that ev'n yet I could my powers employ,
Till I could feel new hopes my mind possess,
Of ease at least, if not of happiness:
Till, not contented, not in discontent,
As my good uncle counsell'd, on I went;
Conscious of youth's great error—nay, the crime
Of manhood now—a dreary waste of time!
Conscious of that account which I must give
How life had passed with me—I strove to live.

Had I, like others, my first hope attain'd,
I must, at least, a certainty have gain'd;
Had I, like others, lost the hope of youth,
Another hope had promised greater truth;
But I in baseless hopes, and groundless views,
Was fated time, and peace, and health to lose,

Impell'd to seek, for ever doom'd to fail,
Is—— But I distress you—let me end my tale.

Something one day occurr'd about a bill
That was not drawn with true mercantile skill,
And I was ask'd and authorised to go
To seek the firm of Clutterbuck and Co.; *
Their hour was past—but when I urged the case,
There was a youth who named a second place;
Where, on occasions of important kind,
I might the man of occupation find.

The house was good, but not so pure and clean
As I had houses of retirement seen;
Yet men, I knew, of meditation deep,
Love not their maidens should their studies sweep;
His room I saw, and must acknowledge, there
Were not the signs of cleanliness or care:
A female servant, void of female grace,
Loose in attire, proceeded to the place;
She stared intrusive on my slender frame,
And boldly ask'd my business and my name.

I gave them both; and, left to be amused,
Well as I might, the parlour I perused.
The shutters half unclosed, the curtains fell
Half down, and made the room half visible:
Late as it was, the little parlour bore
Some tell-tale tokens of the night before;

* Fitzgerald suggests this reading:—

And I was asked to set it right with—Oh,
Romantic title!—Clutterbuck and Co.

There were strange sights and scents about the room,
Of food high season'd, and of strong perfume;
Two unmatch'd sofas ample rents display'd,
Carpet and curtains were alike decay'd;
A large old mirror, with once-gilded frame,
Reflected prints that I forbear to name,
The cinders yet were sleeping in the grate,
Warm from the fire, continued large and late,
The chairs in haste seem'd whirl'd about the room,
As when the sons of riot hurry home,
And leave the troubled place to solitude and gloom.

All this, for I had ample time, I saw,
And prudence question'd—should we not withdraw?
No! but a lady's voice was heard to call
On my attention—and she had it all;
For, lo! she enters, speaking ere in sight,
"Monsieur! I shall not want the chair to-night."

. . . . .

I cannot paint her—something I had seen
So pale and slim, and tawdry and unclean;
With haggard looks, of vice and woe the prey,
Laughing in languor, miserably gay:
Her face, where face appear'd, was amply spread,
By art's coarse pencil, with ill-chosen red,
The flower's fictitious bloom, the blushing of the dead:
But yet 'tis she—the same and not the same—
Who to my bower a heavenly being came;
Who waked my soul's first thought of real bliss,
Whom long I sought, and now I find her—this.

She gave her hand; which, as I lightly press'd,
The cold but ardent grasp my soul oppress'd;
The ruin'd girl disturb'd me, and my eyes
Look'd, I conceive, both sorrow and surprise.
I spoke my business—"He," she answer'd, "comes
"And lodges here—he has the backward rooms—
"He now is absent, and—— But O! the night
"When you preserved me in that horrid fright."

"I was a girl, and thou a boy wert then,
"Nor aught of women knew, nor I of men;
"But I have traffick'd in the world, and thou,
"Doubtless, canst boast of thy experience now."

She spoke—and o'er the practised features threw
The looks that reason charm, and strength subdue.
"Come, my dear friend, discard that look of care,
"All things were made to be, as all things are;
"All to seek pleasure as the end design'd,
"The only good in matter or in mind;
"So was I taught by one, who gave me all
"That my experienced heart can wisdom call.
"O! we have both about the world been tost,
"Thy gain I know not—I, they cry, am lost;
"So let the wise ones talk; they talk in vain,
"And are mistaken both in loss and gain."
And then she sang, and changed from grave to gay,
Till all reproach and anger died away.

And then she moved my pity; for she wept,
And told her miseries till resentment slept;

For when she saw she could not reason blind,
She pour'd her heart's whole sorrows on my mind,
With features graven on my soul, with sighs
Seen, but not heard, with soft imploring eyes,
And voice that needed not, but had the aid
Of powerful words to soften and persuade.

"O! I repent me of the past; and sure
"Grief and repentance make the bosom pure;
"Yet meet thee not with clean and single heart,
"As on the day we met!—and but to part,
"Ere I had drank the cup that to my lip
"Was held, and press'd till I was forced to sip:
"Mine was a childish wish to please my boy,
"His a design his wishes to enjoy.
"T' excuse my fall I plead not love's excess,
"But a weak orphan's need and loneliness.
"I had no parent upon earth—no door
"Was oped to me—young, innocent, and poor,
"Vain, and resentful—You could witness then
"That I was precious in the eyes of men;
"So, made by them a goddess, and denied
"Respect and notice by the women's pride;
"Here scorn'd, there worshipp'd—will it strange
appear,
"Allured and driven, that I settled here?
"Yet loved it not; and never have I pass'd
"One day, and wish'd another like the last.

"Is it not written, He, who came to save
"Sinners, the sins of deepest dye forgave?

"That He His mercy to the sufferers dealt,
"And pardon'd error when the ill was felt?
"Yes! I would hope, there is an eye that reads
"What is within, and sees the heart that bleeds——
"But who on earth will one so lost deplore,
"And who will help that lost one to restore?
"Who will on trust the sigh of grief receive;
"And—all things warring with belief—believe?"

Soften'd, I said—"Be mine the hand and heart,
"If with your world you will consent to part."

She would—she tried——Alas! she did not know
How deeply rooted evil habits grow:
She felt the truth upon her spirits press,
But wanted ease, indulgence, show, excess,
Voluptuous banquets, pleasures—not refined,
But such as soothe to sleep th' opposing mind—
She look'd for idle vice, the time to kill,
And subtle, strong apologies for ill:
Pleasures that brought disgust yet brought relief,
And minds she hated help'd to war with grief.

"Thus then she perished?"—
Nay—but thus she proved
Slave to the vices that she never loved:
But while she thus her better thoughts opposed,
And woo'd the world, the world's deceptions closed:—
I had long lost her, but I sought in vain
To banish pity:—still she gave me pain,
Still I desired to aid her—to direct,
And wished the world, that won her, to reject:

Nor wish'd in vain—there came, at length, request
That I would see a wretch with grief opprest,
By guilt affrighted—and I went to trace
Once more the vice-worn features of that face,
That sin-wreck'd being! and I saw her laid
Where never worldly joy a visit paid:
That world receding fast! the world to come
Conceal'd in terror, ignorance, and gloom.

The wants I saw I could supply with ease,
But there were wants of other kind than these;
Th' awakening thought, the hope-inspiring view—
The doctrines awful, grand, alarming, true—
Most painful to the soul, and yet most healing too:
Still I could something offer, and could send
For other aid—a more important friend,
Whose duty call'd him, and his love no less,
To help the grieving spirit in distress;
To save in that sad hour the drooping prey,
And from its victim drive despair away.

All decent comforts round the sick were seen:
The female helpers quiet, sober, clean;
Her kind physician with a smile appear'd,
And zealous love the pious friend endear'd:
While I, with mix'd sensations, could inquire,
"Hast thou one wish, one unfulfill'd desire?"

Yes! there was yet a female friend, an old
And grieving nurse! to whom it should be told—
If I would tell—that she, her child, had fail'd,
And turn'd from truth! yet truth at length prevail'd.

Still as I went came other change—the frame
And features wasted, and yet slowly came
The end; and so inaudible the breath,
And still the breathing, we exclaim'd—"'Tis death!"
But death it was not: when, indeed, she died,
I sat and his last gentle stroke espied:
When—as it came—or did my fancy trace
That lively, lovely flushing o'er the face?
Bringing back all that my young heart impress'd!
It came—and went!—She sigh'd, and was at rest!

"Adieu!" I said, "fair Frailty! dearly cost
"The love I bore thee—time and treasure lost;
"Heaven would not pain, and grief, and anguish give,
"If man were not by discipline to live;
"And for that better, brighter world prepare,
"That souls with souls, when purified shall share,
"Those stains all done away that must not enter there."

'Twas in that chamber, Richard, I began
To think more deeply of the end of man:
Was it to jostle all his fellows by,
To run before them, and say, "Here am I,
"Fall down, and worship?"—Was it, life throughout,
With circumspection keen to hunt about
As spaniels for their game, where might be found
Abundance more for coffers that abound?
Or was it life's enjoyments to prefer,
Like this poor girl, and then to die like her?
No! He, who gave the faculties, design'd
Another use for the immortal mind:

There is a state in which it will appear
With all the good and ill contracted here;
With gain and loss, improvement and defect;
And then, my soul! what hast thou to expect
For talents laid aside, life's waste, and time's neglect?

Home I return'd, with spirits in that state
Of vacant woe, I strive not to relate,
Nor how, deprived of all her hope and strength,
My soul turn'd feebly to the world at length.
Patient and dull I grew; my uncle's praise
Was largely dealt me on my better days;
A love of money—other love at rest—
Came creeping on, and settled in my breast;
The force of habit held me to the oar,
Till I could relish what I scorn'd before:
I now could talk and scheme with *men of sense*,
Who deal for millions, and who sigh for pence;
And grew so like them, that I heard with joy
Old Blueskin said I was a pretty boy.

But I was sick, and sickness brought disgust;
My peace I could not to my profits trust:
Again some views of brighter kind appear'd,
My heart was humbled, and my mind was clear'd;
I felt those helps that souls diseased restore,
And that cold frenzy, Avarice, raged no more.
From dreams of boundless wealth I then arose;
This place, the scene of infant bliss, I chose,
And here I find relief, and here I seek repose.

Yet much is lost, and not yet much is found,
But what remains, I would believe, is sound;

That first wild passion, that last mean desire,
Are felt no more; but holier hopes require
A mind prepared and steady—my reform
Has fears like his, who, suffering in a storm,
Is on a rich but unknown country cast,
The future fearing, while he feels the past;
But whose more cheerful mind, with hope imbued,
Sees through receding clouds the rising good.

FARMER ELLIS *

OUR knight a tenant had in high esteem,
His constant boast, when justice was his theme:
He praised the farmer's sense, his shrewd discourse,
Free without rudeness, manly, and not coarse;
As farmer, tenant, nay, as man, the knight
Thought Ellis all that is approved and right;
Then he was happy, and some envy drew,
For knowing more than other farmers knew.

Still more t' offend, he to the altar led
The vicar's niece, to early reading bred;
Who, though she freely ventured on the life,
Could never fully be the farmer's wife;
She had a softness, gentleness, and ease,
Sure a coarse mind to humble and displease.

Three darling girls the happy couple bless'd,
Who now the sweetest lot of life possess'd;
For what can more a grateful spirit move
Than health with competence, and peace with love?

Ellis would sometimes, thriving man! retire
To the town inn, and quit the parlour fire;

* Episode from the tale called "Sir Owen Dale," related by the elder brother.

But he was ever kind where'er he went,
Still, when his evenings at the inn were spent,
She mused at home in sullen discontent;
And, sighing yielded to a wish that some
With social spirit to the farm would come:
There was a farmer in the place, whose name,
And skill in rural arts, was known to fame:
He had a pupil, by his landlord sent,
On terms that gave the parties much content;
The youth those arts, and those alone, should learn,
With aught beside his guide had no concern:
He might to neighb'ring towns or distant ride,
And there amusements seek without a guide;
With handsome prints his private room was graced,
His music there, and there his books were placed:
Men knew not if he farm'd, but they allow'd him taste.

Books, prints, and music cease, at times, to charm,
And sometimes men can neither ride nor farm;
They look for kindred minds, and Cecil found,
In Farmer Ellis, one informed and sound;
But in his wife—I hate the fact I tell—
A lovely being, who could please too well:
And he was one who never would deny
Himself a pleasure, or indeed would try.

Early and well the wife of Ellis knew
Where danger was, and trembled at the view;
So evil spirits tremble, but are still
Evil, and lose not the rebellious will:
She sought not safety from the fancied crime,
"And why retreat before the dangerous time?"

Oft came the student of the farm and read,
And found his mind with more than reading fed:
This Ellis seeing, left them, or he stay'd,
As pleased him, not offended nor afraid:
He came in spirits with his girls to play,
Then ask excuse, and laughing, walk away:
When, as he enter'd, Cecil ceased to read,
He would exclaim, "Proceed, my friend, proceed!"
Or, sometimes weary, would to bed retire,
And fear and anger by his ease inspire.

"My conversation does he then despise?
"Leaves he this slighted face for other eyes?"
So said Alicia; and she dwelt so long
Upon that thought, to leave her was to wrong.

Alas! the woman loved the soothing tongue
That yet pronounced her beautiful and young;
The tongue that, seeming careless, ever praised;
The eye that roving, on her person gazed:
The ready service, on the watch to please;
And all such sweet, small courtesies as these.

Still there was virtue, but a rolling stone
On a hill's brow is not more quickly gone;
The slightest motion,—ceasing from our care,—
A moment's absence,—when we're not aware,—
When down it rolls, and at the bottom lies,
Sunk, lost, degraded, never more to rise!
Far off the glorious height from whence it fell,
With all things base and infamous to dwell.

Friendship with woman is a dangerous thing—
Thence hopes avow'd and bold confessions spring;
Frailties confess'd to other frailties lead,
And new confessions new desires succeed;
And, when the friends have thus their hearts disclosed,
They find how little is to guilt opposed.
The foe's attack will on the fort begin,
When he is certain of a friend within.

When all was lost,—or, in the lover's sight,
When all was won,—the lady thought of flight.

"What! sink a slave?" she said, "and with deceit
"The rigid virtue of a husband meet?
"No! arm'd with death, I would his fury brave,
"And own the justice of the blow he gave!
"But thus to see him easy, careless, cold,
"And his confiding folly to behold:
"To feel incessant fears that he should read,
"In looks assumed, the cause whence they proceed,
"I cannot brook; nor will I here abide
"Till chance betrays the crime that shame would hide."
He saw the lengths that women dared to go,
And fear'd the husband both as friend and foe.
Of farming weary—for the guilty mind
Can no resource in guiltless studies find—
Her passion pleased him: he agreed on flight:
They fix'd the method, and they chose the night.

Then, while the Farmer read of public crimes,
Collating coolly *Chronicles* and *Times*,
The flight was taken by the guilty pair,
That made one passage in the columns there.

The heart of Ellis bled; the comfort, pride,
The hope and stay of his existence died;
Rage from the ruin of his peace arose,
And he would follow and destroy his foes;
Would with wild haste the guilty pair pursue,
And when he found—Good Heaven! what would
he do?

His girls—not his—he would not be so weak—
Child was a word he never more must speak!
How did he know what villains had defiled
His honest bed?—he spurn'd the name of child:
Keep them he must; but he would coarsely hide
Their forms, and nip the growth of woman's pride;
He would consume their flesh, abridge their food,
And kill the mother-vices in their blood.

. . . . . .

Ellis was glad to see his landlord come,
A transient joy broke in upon his gloom,
And pleased he led the knight to the superior room:
Where she was wont in happier days to sit,
Who paid with smiles his condescending wit.
There the sad husband, who had seldom been
Where prints acquired in happier days were seen,
Now struck by these, and carried to the past,
A painful look on every object cast:

Sir Owen saw his tenant's troubled state,
But still he wish'd to know the offenders' fate.

"Know you they suffer, Ellis?"—Ellis knew;—
"'Tis well! 'tis just! but have they all their due?
"Have they in mind and body, head and heart,
"Sustain'd the pangs of their accursed part?"—
"They have!"—"'Tis well!"—"and wants enough
to shake
"The firmest mind, the stoutest heart to break."—
"But have you seen them in such misery dwell?"—
"In misery past description."—
"That is well."

"Hear me, Sir Owen! I had sought them long,
"Urged by the pain of ever-present wrong,
"Yet had not seen; and twice the year came round—
"Years hateful now—ere I my victims found:
"But I did find them, in the dungeon's gloom
"Of a small garret—a precarious home;
"For that depended on the weekly pay,
"And they were sorely frighten'd on the day;
"But there they linger'd on from week to week,
"Haunted by ills of which 'tis hard to speak.

"The roof, unceil'd in patches, gave the snow
"Entrance within, and there were heaps below;
"I pass'd a narrow region dark and cold,
"The strait of stairs to that infectious hold;
"And, when I entered, misery met my view
"In every shape she wears, in every hue;

"There frown'd the ruin'd walls that once were white;
"There gleam'd the panes that once admitted light;
"There lay unsavoury scraps of wretched food;
"And there a measure, void of fuel stood.

"That man, that Cecil!—he was left, it seems,
"Unnamed, unnoticed: farewell to his dreams!
"Heirs made by law rejected him of course,
"And left him neither refuge nor resource."—

"Their father's?"—
"No: he was the harlot's son
"Who wrong'd them, whom their duty bade them shun;
"And they were duteous all, and he was all undone.

"Now the lost pair, whom better times had led
"To part disputing, shared their sorrow's bed:
"Their bed!—I shudder as I speak—and shared
"Scraps to their hunger by the hungry spared."

"Man! my good Ellis! can you sigh?"—
"I can:
"In short, Sir Owen, I must feel as man;
"And could you know the miseries they endured,
"The poor, uncertain pittance they procured;
"When, laid aside the needle and the pen,
"Their sickness won the neighbours of their den,
"Poor as they are, and they are passing poor,
"To lend some aid to those who needed more:

"Then, too, an ague with the winter came,
"And in this state—that wife I cannot name
"Brought forth a famish'd child of suffering and of shame.

"This had you known, and traced them to this scene,
"Where all was desolate, defiled, unclean,
"A fireless room, and, where a fire had place,
"The blast loud howling down the empty space,
"You must have felt a part of the distress,
"Forgot your wrongs, and made their suffering less!"

"Sought you them, Ellis, from the mean intent
"To give them succour?"
"What, indeed, I meant
"At first was vengeance; but I long pursued
"The pair, and I at last their misery view'd
"In that vile garret, which I cannot paint –
"The sight was loathsome, and the smell was faint;
"And there that wife,—whom I had loved so well,
"And thought so happy,—was condemn'd to dwell;
"The gay, the grateful wife, whom I was glad
"To see in dress beyond our station clad,
"And to behold among our neighbours fine,
"More than perhaps became a wife of mine;
"And now among her neighbours to explore,
"And see her poorest of the very poor!—

"I would describe it, but I bore a part,
"Nor can explain the feelings of the heart;

"Yet memory since has aided me to trace
"The horrid features of that dismal place.
"There she reclined unmoved, her bosom bare
"To her companion's unimpassion'd stare,
"And my wild wonder:—Seat of virtue! chaste
"As lovely once! O! how wert thou disgraced!
"Upon that breast, by sordid rags defiled,
"Lay the wan features of a famish'd child;—
"That sin-born babe in utter misery laid,
"Too feebly wretched even to cry for aid;
"The ragged sheeting, o'er her person drawn,
"Served for the dress that hunger placed in pawn.

"At the bed's feet the man reclined his frame:
"Their chairs were perish'd to support the flame
"That warm'd his agued limbs; and, sad to see,
"That shook him fiercely as he gazed on me.

"I was confused in this unhappy view:
"My wife! my friend! I could not think it true;
"My children's mother,—my Alicia,—laid
"On such a bed! so wretched,—so afraid!
"And her gay, young seducer, in the guise
"Of all we dread, abjure, defy, despise,
"And all the fear and terror in his look,
"Still more my mind to its foundation shook.

"At last he spoke:—'Long since I would have died,
"'But could not leave her, though for death I sigh'd,
"'And tried the poison'd cup, and dropp'd it as I tried.

" 'She is a woman, and that famish'd thing
" 'Makes her to life, with all its evils, cling:
" 'Feed her, and let her breathe her last in peace,
" 'And all my sufferings with your promise cease!'

" Ghastly he smiled:—I knew not what I felt,
" But my heart melted—hearts of flint would melt,
" To see their anguish, penury, and shame,
" How base, how low, how grovelling they became:
" I could not speak my purpose, but my eyes
" And my expression bade the creature rise.

" Yet, O! that woman's look! my words are vain
" Her mix'd and troubled feelings to explain;
" True, there was shame and consciousness of fall,
" But yet remembrance of my love withal,
" And knowledge of that power which she would now
recall.

" But still the more that she to memory brought,
" The greater anguish in my mind was wrought:
" The more she tried to bring the past in view,
" She greater horror on the present threw;
" This war within, these passions in their strife,
" If thus protracted, had exhausted life;
" But the strong view of these departed years
" Caused a full burst of salutary tears,
" And as I wept at large, and thought alone,
" I felt my reason reascend her throne."

" My friend!" Sir Owen answer'd, " what became
" Of your just anger?—when you saw their shame,

"It was your triumph, and you should have shown
"Strength, if not joy—their sufferings were their own."

"Alas, for them! their own in very deed!
"And they of mercy had the greater need."

"But *could* you help them?"
"Think, Sir Owen, how
"I saw them then—methinks I see them now!
"She had not food, nor aught a mother needs,
"Who for another life and dearer feeds:
"I saw her speechless; on her wither'd breast
"The wither'd child extended, but not prest,
"Who sought, with moving lip and feeble cry,
"Vain instinct! for the fount without supply."

"Sure it was all a grievous, odious scene,
"Where all was dismal, melancholy, mean,
"Foul with compell'd neglect, unwholesome, and unclean;
"That arm, — that eye, — the cold, the sunken cheek,—
"Spoke all, Sir Owen—fiercely miseries speak!"

"Revenge was thine—thou hadst the power, the right;
"To give it up was heaven's own act to slight."

"Tell me not, Sir, of rights, and wrongs, or powers!
"I felt it written—'Vengeance is not ours!'

"And what, Sir Owen, will our vengeance do?
"It follows us when we our foe pursue,
"And, as we strike the blow, it smites the smiters too."

"What didst thou, man?"
"I brought them to a cot
"Behind your larches,—a sequester'd spot,
"Where dwells the woman: I believe her mind
"Is now enlighten'd—I am sure resign'd:
"She gave her infant, though with aching heart
"And faltering spirit, to be nursed apart."

"And that vile scoundrel——"
"Nay, his name restore,
"And call him Cecil,—for he is no more:
"When my vain help was offer'd, he was past
"All human aid, and shortly breathed his last;
"But his heart open'd, and he lived to see
"Guilt in himself, and find a friend in me.

"Strange was their parting, parting on the day
"I offer'd help, and took the man away,
"Sure not to meet again, and not to live
"And taste of joy.—He feebly cried, 'Forgive!'"

"But, Ellis, tell me, didst thou thus desire
"To heap upon their heads those coals of fire?"

"If fire to melt, that feeling is confest,—
"If fire to shame, I let that question rest;
"But if aught more the sacred words imply,
"I know it not—no commentator I."

"Then did you freely from your soul forgive?"—
"Sure as I hope before my Judge to live,
"Sure as I trust His mercy to receive,
"Sure as His Word I honour and believe,
"Sure as the Saviour died upon the tree
"For all who sin,—for that dear wretch and me,—
"Whom never more on earth will I forsake or see."

DELAY HAS DANGER

THREE weeks had pass'd, and Richard rambles now
Far as the dinners of the day allow;
He rode to Farley Grange and Finley Mere,
That house so ancient, and that lake so clear:
He rode to Ripley through that river gay,
Where in the shallow stream the loaches play,
And stony fragments stay the winding stream,
And gilded pebbles at the bottom gleam,
Giving their yellow surface to the sun,
And making proud the waters as they run:
It is a lovely place, and at the side
Rises a mountain rock in rugged pride;
And in that rock are shapes of shells, and forms
Of creatures in old worlds, of nameless worms,
Whose generations lived and died ere man,
A worm of other class, to crawl began.

There is a town call'd Silford, where his steed
Our traveller rested,—He the while would feed
His mind by walking to and fro, to meet,
He knew not what adventure, in the street:
A stranger there, but yet a window-view
Gave him a face that he conceived he knew;

He saw a tall, fair, lovely lady, dress'd
As one whom taste and wealth had jointly bless'd;
He gazed, but soon a footman at the door
Thundering, alarm'd her, who was seen no more.

"This was the lady whom her lover bound
"In solemn contract, and then proved unsound:
"Of this affair I have a clouded view,
"And should be glad to have it clear'd by you."

So Richard spake, and instant George replied,
"I had the story from the injured side,
"But when resentment and regret were gone,
"And pity (shaded by contempt) came on.

"Frail was the hero of my tale, but still
"Was rather drawn by accident than will;
"Some without meaning into guilt advance,
"From want of guard, from vanity, from chance;
"Man's weakness flies his more immediate pain,
"A little respite from his fears to gain;
"And takes the part that he would gladly fly,
"If he had strength and courage to deny.

"But now my tale, and let the moral say,
"When hope can sleep, there's Danger in Delay.

"First be it granted all was duly said
"By the fond youth to the believing maid;
"Let us suppose with many a sigh there came
"The declaration of the deathless flame;—

"And so her answer—'She was happy then,
"'Bless'd in herself, and did not think of men;
"'And with such comforts in her present state,
"'A wish to change it was to tempt her fate:
"'That she would not; but yet she would confess
"'With him she thought her hazard would be less;
"'Nay, more, she would esteem, she would regard
express:
"'But to be brief—if he could wait and see
"'In a few years what his desires would be.'"—

Henry for years read months, then weeks, nor found
The lady thought his judgment was unsound;
"For months read weeks," she read it to his praise,
And had some thoughts of changing it to *days*.

And here a short excursion let me make,
A lover tried, I think, for lovers' sake;
And teach the meaning in a lady's mind
When you can none in her expressions find:
Words are design'd that meaning to convey,
But often *Yea* is hidden in a *Nay!*
And what the charmer wills, some gentle hints betray.
Then, too, when ladies mean to yield at length,
They match their reasons with the lover's strength,
And, kindly cautious, will no force employ
But such as he can baffle or destroy.

A downright *No!* would make a man despair
Or leave for kinder nymph the cruel fair;
But "*No!* because I'm very happy now,
"Because I dread th' irrevocable vow,

"Because I fear papa will not approve,
"Because I love not—no, I cannot love;
"Because you men of Cupid make a jest,
"Because—in short, a single life is best."
A *No!* when back'd by reasons of such force,
Invites approach, and will recede of course.

Ladies, like towns besieged, for honour's sake,
Will some defence or its appearance make;
On first approach there's much resistance made,
And conscious weakness hides in bold parade;
With lofty looks, and threat'nings stern and proud,
"Come, if you dare," is said in language loud,
But if th' attack be made with care and skill,
"Come," says the yielding party, "if you will;"
Then each the other's valiant acts approve,
And twine their laurels in a wreath of love.—

We now retrace our tale, and forward go,—
Thus Henry rightly read Cecilia's *No!*
His prudent father, who had duly weigh'd,
And well approved the fortune of the maid,
Not much resisted, just enough to show
He knew his power, and would his son should know.

"Harry, I will, while I your bargain make,
"That you a journey to our patron take:
"I know her guardian; care will not become
"A lad when courting; as you must be dumb,
"You may be absent; I for you will speak,
"And ask what you are not supposed to seek."

Then came the parting hour, and what arise
When lovers part! expressive looks and eyes,
Tender and tearful,—many a fond adieu,
And many a call the sorrow to renew;
Sighs such as lovers only can explain,
And words that they might undertake in vain.

Cecilia liked it not; she had, in truth,
No mind to part with her enamour'd youth;
But thought it foolish thus themselves to cheat,
And part for nothing but again to meet.
Fear saw him hunting, leaping, falling—led,
Maim'd and disfigured, groaning to his bed;
Saw him in perils, duels,—dying,—dead.
But Prudence answer'd, "Is not every maid
"With equal cause for him she loves afraid?"
If some fond girl express'd a tender pain
Lest some fair rival should allure her swain,
To such she answer'd, with a look severe,
"Can one you doubt be worthy of your fear?"

My lord was kind,—a month had pass'd away,
And Henry stay'd,—he sometimes named a day;
But still my lord was kind, and Henry still must stay:
His father's words to him were words of fate—
"Wait, 'tis your duty; 'tis my pleasure, wait!"

In all his walks, in hilly heath or wood,
Cecilia's form the pensive youth pursued;
In the grey morning, in the silent noon,
In the soft twilight, by the sober moon,
In those forsaken rooms, in that immense saloon;

And he, now fond of that seclusion grown,
There reads her letters, and there writes his own.
"Here none approach," said he, "to interfere,
"But I can think of my Cecilia here!"

But there did come—and how it came to pass
Who shall explain?—a mild and blue-eyed lass;—
It was the work of accident, no doubt—
The cause unknown—we say, "as things fall out;"
The damsel enter'd there, in wand'ring round about:
At first she saw not Henry; and she ran,
As from a ghost, when she beheld a man.

She was the daughter of a priest, whose life
Was brief and sad: he lost a darling wife,
And Fanny then her father, who could save
But a small portion; but his all he gave,
With the fair orphan, to a sister's care,
And her good spouse: they were the ruling pair—
Steward and steward's lady—o'er a tribe,
Each under each, whom I shall not describe.

This grave old couple, childless and alone,
Would, by their care, for Fanny's loss atone:
She had been taught in schools of honest fame;
And to the Hall, as to a home, she came,
My lord assenting: yet, as meet and right,
Fanny was held from every hero's sight,
Who might in youthful error cast his eyes
On one so gentle as a lawful prize,
On border land, whom, as their right or prey,
A youth from either side might bear away.

Some handsome lover of th' inferior class
Might as a wife approve the lovely lass;
Or some invader from the class above,
Who, more presuming, would his passion prove
By asking less—love only for his love.

This much-experienced aunt her fear express'd,
And dread of old and young, of host and guest.
"Go not, my Fanny, in their way," she cried,
"It is not right that virtue should be tried;
"So, to be safe, be ever at my side."
She was not ever at that side; but still
Observ'd her precepts, and obey'd her will.

But in the morning's dawn and evening's gloom
She could not lock the damsel in her room;
And Fanny thought, "I will ascend these stairs
"To see the chapel,—there are none at prayers;
"None," she believed, "had yet to dress return'd,
"By whom a timid girl might be discern'd:"
In her slow motion, looking, as she glides,
On pictures, busts, and what she met besides,
And speaking softly to herself alone,
Or singing low in melancholy tone;
And thus she rambled through the still domain,
Room after room, again, and yet again.

But, to retrace our story, still we say,
To this saloon the maiden took her way;
Where she beheld our Youth, and frighten'd ran,
And so their friendship in her fear began.

But dare she thither once again advance,
And still suppose the man will think it chance?
Nay, yet again, and what has chance to do
With this?—I know not: doubtless Fanny knew.

Now, of the meeting of a modest maid
And sober youth why need we be afraid?
And when a girl's amusements are so few
As Fanny's were, what would you have her do?
Reserved herself, a decent youth to find,
And just be civil, sociable, and kind,
And look together at the setting sun,
Then at each other—what the evil done?

Then Fanny took my little lord to play,
And bade him not intrude on Henry's way:
"O, he intrudes not!" said the Youth, and grew
Fond of the child, and would amuse him too;
Would make such faces, and assume such looks—
He loved it better than his gayest books.

When man with man would an acquaintance seek,
He will his thoughts in chosen language speak;
And they converse on divers themes, to find
If they possess a corresponding mind;
But man with woman has foundation laid,
And built up friendship ere a word is said:
'Tis not with words that they their wishes tell,
But with a language answering quite as well;
And thus they find, when they begin t' explore
Their way by speech, they knew it all before.

And now it chanced again the pair, when dark,
Met in their way when wandering in the park;
Not in the common path, for so they might,
Without a wonder, wander day or night;
But, when in pathless ways their chance will bring
A musing pair, we do admire the thing.

The Youth in meeting read the damsel's face,
As if he meant her inmost thoughts to trace:
On which her colour changed, as if she meant
To give her aid, and help his kind intent.

Both smiled and parted, but they did not speak—
The smile implied, "Do tell me what you seek:"
They took their different ways with erring feet,
And met again, surprised that they could meet;
Then must they speak—and something of the air
Is always ready—"'Tis extremely fair!"

"It was so pleasant!" Henry said; "the beam
"Of that sweet light so brilliant on the stream;
"And chiefly yonder, where that old cascade
"Has for an age its simple music made;
"All so delightful, soothing, and serene!
"Do you not feel it? not enjoy the scene?
"Something it has that words will not express,
"But rather hide, and make th' enjoyment less:
"'Tis what our souls conceive, 'tis what our hearts
confess."

Poor Fanny's heart at these same words confess'd
How well he painted, and how rightly guess'd;

And, while they stood admiring their retreat,
Henry found something like a mossy seat;
But Fanny sat not; no, she rather pray'd
That she might leave him, she was so afraid.

"Not, sir, of you; your goodness I can trust,
"But folks are so censorious and unjust,
"They make no difference, they pay no regard
"To our true meaning, which is very hard
"And very cruel; great the pain it cost
"To lose such pleasure, but it must be lost;
"Did people know how free from thought of ill
"One's meaning is, their malice would be still."

At this she wept; at least a glittering gem
Shone in each eye, and there was fire in them,
For as they fell, the sparkles, at his feet,
He felt emotions very warm and sweet.

Our lover then believed he must not seem
Cold to the maid who gave him her esteem;
Not manly this; Cecilia had his heart,
But it was lawful with his time to part;
It would be wrong in her to take amiss
A virtuous friendship for a girl like this;
False or disloyal he would never prove,
But kindness here took nothing from his love:
Soldiers to serve a foreign prince are known,
When not on present duty to their own;
So, though our bosom's queen we still prefer,
We are not always on our knees to her.

The father still commanded, "Wait awhile,"
And the son answer'd in submissive style,
Grieved, but obedient; and obedience teased
His lady's spirit more than grieving pleased:
And in her letters might be traced reproof,
Distant indeed, but visible enough;
This should the wandering of his heart have stay'd;
Alas! the wanderer was the vainer made.

The parties daily met, as by consent,
And yet it always seem'd by accident;
Till in the nymph the shepherd had been blind
If he had fail'd to see a manner kind,
With that expressive look, that seem'd to say,
"You do not speak, and yet you see you may."

O, yes, he saw, and he resolved to fly,
And blamed his heart, unwilling to comply:
Cecilia yet was mistress of his mind,
But oft he wish'd her, like his Fanny, kind;
Her fondness soothed him, for the man was vain,
And he perceived that he could give her pain:

Cecilia once her honest love avow'd
To make him happy, not to make him proud;
But she would not, for every asking sigh,
Confess the flame that waked his vanity;
But this poor maiden, every day and hour,
Would by fresh kindness feed the growing power;
And he indulged, vain being! in the joy,
That he alone could raise it, or destroy.

O! vain desire of youth, that in the hour
Of strong temptation, when he feels the power,
And knows how daily his desires increase,
Yet will he wait, and sacrifice his peace,
Will trust to chance to free him from the snare,
Of which, long since, his conscience said, beware,
Or look for strange deliverance from that ill,
That he might fly, could he command the will!
How can he freedom from the future seek,
Who feels already that he grows too weak?
And thus refuses to resist, till time
Removes the power, and makes the way for crime.

It was his purpose every morn he rose,
The dangerous friendship he had made to close:
It was his torment nightly, ere he slept,
To feel his prudent purpose was not kept.
True, he has wonder'd why the timid maid
Meets him so often, and is not afraid;
And why that female dragon, fierce and keen,
Has never in their private walks been seen;
And often he has thought, "What can their silence mean?"
This sometimes entered Henry's mind, and then,
"Who shall account for women or for men?"
He said, "or who their secret thoughts explore?
"Why do I vex me? I will think no more."

My lord of late had said, in manner kind,
"My good friend Harry, do not think us blind!"

Something his father wrote that gave him pain:
"I know not, son, if you should yet remain;—
"Be cautious, Harry, favours to procure
"We strain a point, but we must first be sure:
"Love is a folly,—that, indeed, is true,—
"But something still is to our honour due,
"So I must leave the thing to my good lord and you."

But from Cecilia came remonstrance strong:—
"You write too darkly, and you stay too long;
"We hear reports; and, Henry, mark me well,—
"I heed not every tale that triflers tell;—
"Be you no trifler; dare not to believe
"That I am one whom words and vows deceive:
"You know your heart, your hazard you will learn,
"And this your trial—instantly return."

Uneasy, anxious, fill'd with self-reproof,
He now resolved to quit his patron's roof;
And then again his vacillating mind
To stay resolved, and that her pride should find;
Debating thus, his pen the lover took,
And chose the words of anger and rebuke.

Again, yet once again, the conscious pair
Met, and "O speak!" was Fanny's silent prayer;
And, "I must speak," said the embarrass'd youth,
"Must save my honour, must confess the truth:
"Then I must lose her; but, by slow degrees,
"She will regain her peace, and I my ease."

Ah! foolish man: to virtue true nor vice,
He buys distress, and self-esteem the price;
And what his gain?—a tender smile and sigh
From a fond girl to feed his vanity.
Thus, every day they lived, and every time
They met, increased his anguish and his crime.

Still in their meetings they were ofttimes nigh
The darling theme, and then pass'd trembling by;
On those occasions Henry often tried
For the sad truth—and then his heart denied
The utterance due: thus daily he became
The prey of weakness, vanity, and shame.

But soon a day, that was their doubts to close,
On the fond maid and thoughtless youth arose.
Within the park, beside the bounding brook,
The social pair their usual ramble took;
And there the steward found them: they could trace
News in his look, and gladness in his face.

He was a man of riches, bluff and big,
With clean brown broadcloth, and with white cut wig:
He bore a cane of price, with riband tied,
And a fat spaniel waddled at his side:
To every being whom he met he gave
His looks expressive; civil, gay, or grave,
But condescending all; and each declared
How much he govern'd, and how well he fared.

The trembling Fanny, as he came in view,
Within the chestnut grove in fear withdrew;

While Henry wonder'd, not without a fear,
Of that which brought th' important man so near:
Doubt was dispers'd by—"My esteem'd young man!"
As he with condescending grace began—
"Though you have not, with craving soul, applied
"To us, and ask'd the fortune of your bride,
"An orphan maid——Your patience! you shall have
"Your time to speak, I now attention crave;—
"Fanny, dear girl! has in my spouse and me
"Friends of a kind we wish our friends to be,
"None of the poorest——nay, sir, no reply,
"You shall not need——and we are born to die."

"Sir," said the Youth, his terrors all awake,
"Hear me, I pray, I beg,—for mercy's sake!
"Sir, were the secrets of my soul confess'd,
"Would you admit the truths that I protest
"Are such——your pardon——"
"Pardon! good, my friend,
"I not alone will pardon, I commend:
"Come, sir, your hand——"
"In mercy, hear me now!"—
"I cannot hear you, time will not allow:
"You know my station, what on me depends,
"For ever needed—but we part as friends;
"And here comes one who will the whole explain,
"My better self—and we shall meet again."

"Sir, I entreat——"
"Then be entreaty made
"To her, a woman, one you may persuade;
"A little teasing, but she will comply,
"And loves her niece too fondly to deny."

Hurrying she came—"Now, what has he confess'd,
"Ere I could come to set your heart at rest?
"What! he has grieved you! Yet he, too, approves
"The thing! but man will tease you, if he loves.
"But now for business: tell me, did you think
"That we should always at your meetings wink?
"Think you, you walk'd unseen? There are who bring
"To me all secrets—O, you wicked thing!
"Poor Fanny! now I think I see her blush,
"All red and rosy, when I beat the bush;
"And hide your secret, said I, if you dare!
"So out it came, like an affrighten'd hare.
"Miss! said I, gravely; and the trembling maid
"Pleased me at heart to see her so afraid;
"And then she wept;—now, do remember this,
"Never to chide her when she does amiss;
"For she is tender as the callow bird,
"And cannot bear to have her temper stirr'd;—
"Fanny, I said, then whisper'd her the name,
"And caused such looks—Yes, yours are just the same;
"But hear my story—When your love was known
"For this our child—she is, in fact, our own—
"Then, first debating, we agreed at last
"To seek my Lord, and tell him what had pass'd."

"To tell the Earl?"
"Yes, truly, and why not?
"And then together we contrived our plot."

"Eternal God!"

"Nay, be not so surprised,—
"In all the matter we were well advised;
"We saw my Lord, and Lady Jane was there,
"And said to Johnson, 'Johnson, take a chair;'
"True, we are servants in a certain way,
"But in the higher places so are they;
"We are obey'd in ours, and they in theirs obey—
"So Johnson bow'd, for that was right and fit,
"And had no scruple with the Earl to sit—
"Why look you so impatient while I tell
"What they debated?—you must like it well.

"'Let them go on,' our gracious Earl began;
"'They will go off,' said, joking, my good man:
"'Well!' said the Countess,—she's a lover's friend,—
"'What if they do, they make the speedier end'——
"O! we have watched you on from day to day,
"'There go the lovers!' we were wont to say—
"But why that look?"—

"Dear madam, I implore
"A single moment!"—

"I can give no more:
"Here are your letters—that's a female pen,
"Said I to Fanny.—'Tis his sister's, then,'
"Replied the maid.—No! never must you stray;
"Or hide your wanderings, if you should, I pray;
"I know, at least I fear, the best may err,
"But keep the by-walks of your life from her.

"Now, mind that none with her divide your heart,
"For she would die ere lose the smallest part;

"And I rejoice that all has gone so well,
"For who th' effect of Johnson's rage can tell?
"He had his fears when you began to meet,
"But I assured him there was no deceit:
"He is a man who kindness will requite,
"But injured once, revenge is his delight;
"And he would spend the best of his estates
"To ruin, goods and body, them he hates;
"Come, read your letters—I must now be gone,
"And think of matters that are coming on."

Henry was lost,—his brain confused, his soul
Dismay'd and sunk, his thoughts beyond control;
Borne on by terror, he foreboding read
Cecilia's letter! and his courage fled.

Cecilia much had heard, and told him all
That scandal taught—"A servant at the Hall,
"Or servant's daughter, in the kitchen bred,
"Whose father would not with her mother wed,
"Was now his choice! a blushing fool, the toy,
"Or the attempted, both of man and boy;
"More than suspected, but without the wit
"Or the allurements for such creatures fit;
"Not virtuous though unfeeling, cold as ice
"And yet not chaste, the weeping fool of vice;
"Yielding, not tender; feeble, not refined;
"Her form insipid, and without a mind.

"Rival! she spurn'd the word; but let him stay,
"Warn'd as he was! beyond the present day,

"Whate'er his patron might object to this,
"The uncle-butler, or the weeping miss—
"Let him from this one single day remain,
"And then return! he would to her, in vain;
"There let him then abide, to earn, or crave
"Food undeserved! and be with slaves a slave."

Had reason guided anger, govern'd zeal,
Or chosen words to make a lover feel,
She might have saved him—anger and abuse
Will but defiance and revenge produce.

"Unjust and cruel, insolent and proud!"
He said, indignant, and he spoke aloud.
"Butler! and servant! Gentlest of thy sex,
"Thou wouldst not thus a man who loved thee vex.

And then, that instant, there appear'd the maid,
By his sad looks in her approach dismay'd;
Such timid sweetness, and so wrong'd, did more
Than all her pleading tenderness before.
In that weak moment, when disdain and pride,
And fear and fondness, drew the man aside,
In this weak moment—"Wilt thou," he began,
"Be mine?" and joy o'er all her features ran;
"I will!" she softly whisper'd; but the roar
Of cannon would not strike his spirit more;
Ev'n as his lips the lawless contract seal'd
He felt that conscience lost her sevenfold shield,
And honour fled; but still he spoke of love,
And all was joy in the consenting dove.

That evening all in fond discourse was spent,
When the sad lover to his chamber went,
To think on what had pass'd, to grieve and to repent:
Early he rose, and look'd with many a sigh
On the red light that fill'd the eastern sky;
Oft had he stood before, alert and gay,
To hail the glories of the new-born day:
But now dejected, languid, listless, low,
He saw the wind upon the water blow,
And the cold stream curl'd onward as the gale
From the pine-hill blew harshly down the dale;
On the right side the youth a wood survey'd,
With all its dark intensity of shade;
Where the rough wind alone was heard to move,
In this, the pause of nature and of love,
When now the young are rear'd, and when the old,
Lost to the tie, grow negligent and cold—
Far to the left he saw the huts of men,
Half hid in mist, that hung upon the fen;
Before him swallows, gathering for the sea,
Took their short flights, and twitter'd on the lea;
And near the bean-sheaf stood, the harvest done,
And slowly blacken'd in the sickly sun;
All these were sad in nature, or they took
Sadness from him, the likeness of his look,
And of his mind—he ponder'd for a while,
Then met his Fanny with a borrow'd smile.*

. . . . . .

Five years had pass'd, and what was Henry then?
The most repining of repenting men;

* These are the lines which Lord Tennyson so much admired. See Preface.

With a fond, teasing, anxious wife, afraid
Of all attention to another paid;
Yet powerless she her husband to amuse,
Lives but t' entreat, implore, resent, accuse;
Jealous and tender, conscious of defects,
She merits little, and yet much expects;
She looks for love that now she cannot see,
And sighs for joy that never more can be;
On his retirements her complaints intrude,
And fond reproof endears his solitude:
While he her weakness (once her kindness) sees,
And his affections in her languor freeze;
Regret, uncheck'd by hope, devours his mind,
He feels unhappy, and he grows unkind.

"Fool! to be taken by a rosy cheek,
"And eyes that cease to sparkle or to speak;
"Fool! for this child my freedom to resign,
"When one the glory of her sex was mine.

"What fiend possess'd me when I tamely gave
"My forced assent to be an idiot's slave?
"Her beauty vanish'd, what for me remains?
"Th' eternal clicking of the galling chains:
"Her person truly I may think my own,
"Seen without pleasure, without triumph shown:
"Doleful she sits, her children at her knees,
"And gives up all her feeble powers to please;
"While from this burden to my soul I hide,
"To think what Fate has dealt, and what denied.

Such was his fate, and he must yet endure
The self-contempt that no self-love can cure:
Some business call'd him to a wealthy town
When unprepared for more than Fortune's frown;
There at a house he gave his luckless name,
The master absent, and Cecilia came;
Unhappy man! he could not, dared not speak,
But look'd around, as if retreat to seek:
This she allow'd not; but, with brow severe,
Ask'd him his business, sternly bent to hear;
He had no courage, but he view'd that face
As if he sought for sympathy and grace;
In vain; not long he waited, but with air,
That of all grace compell'd him to despair,
She rang the bell, "Attend this person out,
"And if he speaks, hear what he comes about!"
Then, with cool curtsy, from the room withdrew,
That seem'd to say, "Unhappy man, adieu!"

Thus will it be when man permits a vice
First to invade his heart, and then entice;
When wishes vain and undefined arise,
And that weak heart deceive, seduce, surprise;
When evil Fortune works on Folly's side,
And rash Resentment adds a spur to Pride;
Then life's long troubles from those actions come,
In which a moment may decide our doom.

WILLIAM BAILEY *

WILLIAM was honest, simple, gentle, kind,
Laborious, studious, and to thrift inclined;
More neat than youthful peasant in his dress,
And yet so careful, that it cost him less:
He kept from inns, though doom'd an inn to keep,
And all his pleasures and pursuits were cheap:
Yet would the youth perform a generous deed,
When reason saw or pity felt the need;
He of his labour and his skill would lend,
Nay, of his money, to a suffering friend.

Constant at church, and there a little proud,
He sang with boldness, and he read aloud;
Self-taught to write, he his example took
And form'd his letters from a printed book.

Black parted locks his polish'd forehead press'd;
His placid looks an easy mind confess'd:
The lighter damsels call'd his manner prim,
And laugh'd at virtue so array'd in him;
Yet was he full of glee, and had his strokes
Of rustic wit, his repartees and jokes;

* A tale told by the Squire about his neighbour the landlord of the "Golden Fleece."

Nor was averse, ere yet he pledged his love,
To stray with damsels in the shady grove;
When he would tell them, as they walk'd along,
How the birds sang, and imitate their song.

Frances, like William, felt her heart incline
To neat attire—but Frances would be fine:
Though small the farm, the farmer's daughter knew
Her rank in life, and she would have it too:
This, and this only, gave the lover pain,
He thought it needless, and he judged it vain:
Advice in hints he to the fault applied,
And talk'd of sin, of vanity, and pride.

"And what is proud," said Frances, "but to stand
"Singing at church, and sawing thus your hand?
"Looking at heaven above, as if to bring
"The holy angels down to hear you sing?
"And when you write, you try with all your skill,
"And cry, no wonder that you wrote so ill!
"For you were ever to yourself a rule,
"And humbly add, you never were at school—
"Is that not proud?—And I have heard beside,
"The proudest creatures have the humblest pride:
"If you had read the volumes I have hired,
"You'd see your fault, nor try to be admired;
"For they who read such books can always tell
"The fault within, and read the mind as well."

William had heard of hiring books before,
He knew she read, and he inquired no more;
On him the subject was completely lost,
What he regarded was the time and cost;

Yet that was trifling—just a present whim,
"Novels and stories! what were they to him?"

With such slight quarrels, or with those as slight,
They lived in love, and dream'd of its delight.
Her duties Fanny knew, both great and small,
And she with diligence observed them all;
If e'er she fail'd a duty to fulfil,
'Twas childish error, not rebellious will;
For her much reading, though it touch'd her heart,
Could neither vice nor indolence impart.

Yet, when from William and her friends retired,
She found her reading had her mind inspired
With hopes and thoughts of high mysterious things,
Such as the early dream of kindness brings;
And then she wept, and wonder'd as she read,
And new emotions in her heart were bred:
She sometimes fancied that when love was true
'Twas more than she and William ever knew;
More than the shady lane in summer eve,
More than the sighing when he took his leave:
More than his preference when the lads advance
And choose their partners for the evening dance;
Nay, more than midnight thoughts and morning dreams,
Or talk when love and marriage are the themes;
In fact, a something not to be defined,
Of all-subduing, all-commanding kind,
That fills the fondest heart, that rules the proudest mind.

While yet to wait the pair were half content,
And half disposed their purpose to repent,
A spinster aunt, in some great baron's place,
Would see a damsel, pride of all her race:
And Fanny, flatter'd by the matron's call,
Obey'd her aunt, and long'd to see the Hall.

Now that good dame had in the castle dwelt
So long that she for all its people felt;
She kept her sundry keys, and ruled o'er all,
Female and male, domestics in the hall;
By her lord trusted, worthy of her trust,
Proud but obedient, bountiful but just.

She praised her lucky stars, that in her place
She never found neglect, nor felt disgrace:
To do her duty was her soul's delight,
This her inferiors would to theirs excite,
This her superiors notice and requite;
To either class she gave the praises due,
And still more grateful as more favour'd grew.
Her lord and lady were of peerless worth,
In power unmatch'd, in glory and in birth.

There was Lord Robert! could she have her choice,
From the world's masters he should have her voice;
So kind and gracious in his noble ways,
It was a pleasure speaking in his praise:
And Lady Catherine,—O! a prince's pride
Might by one smile of hers be gratified;
And such the virtue of the noble race,
It reach'd the meanest servant in the place;

All, from the chief attendant on my lord
To the groom's helper, had her civil word;
From Miss Montregor, who the ladies taught,
To the rude lad who in the garden wrought;
From the first favourite to the meanest drudge,
Were no such women, Heaven should be her judge.

When William first the invitation read
It some displeasure in his spirit bred,
Not that one jealous thought the man possess'd,
He was by fondness, not by fear distress'd;
But when his Fanny to his mind convey'd
The growing treasures of the ancient maid,
The thirty years, come June, of service past,
Her lasting love, her life that would not last;
Her power! her place!

He answered, "You are right;
"But things appear in such a different light!"
Her parents blest her, and, as well became
Their love, advised her, that they might not blame;
They said, "If she should earl or countess meet,
"She should be humble, cautious, and discreet;
"Humble, but not abased, remembering all
"Are kindred sinners,—children of the fall;
"That from the earth our being we receive,
"And are all equal when the earth we leave."

The mother's whisper cannot here have place,
The words distinguish'd were but caps and lace,
With something lying in a cedar chest,
And a shrewd smile that further thoughts express'd.

So went the pair; and William told at night
Of a reception gracious and polite;
He spake of galleries long and pictures tall,
The handsome parlours, the prodigious hall;
The busts, the statues, and the floors of stone,
The storied arras, and the vast saloon,
In which was placed an Indian chest and screen,
With figures such as he had never seen:
He told of these as men enraptured tell,
And gave to all their praise, and all was well.

Left by the lover, the desponding maid
Was of the matron's ridicule afraid;
But when she heard a welcome frank and kind,
The wonted firmness repossess'd her mind;
Pleased by the looks of love her aunt display'd,
Her fond professions, and her kind parade.
In her own room, and with her niece apart,
She gave up all the secrets of her heart;
And, grown familiar, bid her Fanny come,
Partake her cheer, and make herself at home.

Shut in that room, upon its cheerful board
She laid the comforts of no vulgar hoard;
Then press'd the damsel both with love and pride,—
For both she felt—and would not be denied.
Grace she pronounced before and after meat,
And blest her God that she could talk and eat;
Then with new glee she sang her patron's praise——
"He had no paltry arts, no pimping ways;
"She had the roast and boil'd of every day,
"That sent the poor with grateful hearts away;

"And she was grateful——Come, my darling, think
"Of them you love the best, and let us drink."

And now she drank the healths of those above,
Her noble friends, whom she must ever love;
But not together, not the young and old,
But one by one, the number duly told;
And told their merits too—there was not one
Who had not said a gracious thing or done;
Nor could she praise alone, but she would take
A cheerful glass for every favourite's sake,—
And all were favourites—till the rosy cheek
Spoke for the tongue that nearly ceased to speak;
But there she ended—felt the singing head,
Then pray'd as custom will'd, and so to bed.

The morn was pleasant, and the ancient maid
With her fair niece about the mansion stray'd:
There was no room without th' appropriate tale
Of blood and murder, female sprite or male;
There was no picture that th' historic dame
Pass'd by and gave not its peculiar fame;
The births, the visits, weddings, burials, all
That chanced for ages at the noble Hall.
This was her first delight, her pride, her boast,
She told of many an heiress, many a toast,
Of Lady Ellen's flight, of Lord Orlando's ghost;
The maid turn'd pale, and what should then ensue
But wine and cake—the dame was frighten'd too.

The aunt and niece now walk'd about the grounds,
And sometimes met the gentry in their rounds;

"Do let us turn!" the timid girl exclaim'd—
"Turn!" said the aunt, "of what are you ashamed?
"What is there frightful in such looks as those?
"What is it, child, you fancy or suppose?
"Look at Lord Robert, see if you can trace
"More than true honour in that handsome face!

"There! let them pass"——"Why, yes, indeed 'tis true
"That was a look, and was design'd for you;
"But what the wonder when the sight is new?"

A month had pass'd; "And when will Fanny come?"
The lover ask'd, and found the parents dumb:
Silence so long they could not understand,
And this of one who wrote so neat a hand;
Their sister sure would send were aught amiss,
But youth is thoughtless—there is hope in this.

As time elapsed, their wonder changed to woe,
William would lose another day, and go;
Yet if she should be wilful and remain,
He had no power to take her home again:
But he would go!—He went and he return'd,—
And in his look the pair his tale discern'd:
Stupid in grief, it seem'd not that he knew
How he came home, or what he should pursue:
Fanny was gone!—her aunt was sick in bed,
Dying, she said—none cared if she were dead;
Her charge, his darling, was decoy'd, was fled!

But at what time, and whither, and with whom,
None seem'd to know—all surly, shy, or dumb.

Moved by his grief, the father sought the place,
Ask'd for his girl, and talk'd of her disgrace;
Spoke of the villain, on whose cursed head
He pray'd that vengeance might be amply shed;
Then sought his sister, and beheld her grief,
Her pain, her danger,—this was no relief.

"Where is my daughter? bring her to my sight!"—
"Brother, I'm rack'd and tortured day and night."—
"Where is my daughter?"—"She would take her oath
"For her right doing, for she knew them both,
"And my young lord was honour."—"Woman, cease!
"And give your guilty conscience no such peace—
"You've sold the wretched girl, you have betray'd your niece."—
"The Lord be good! and O! the pains that come
"In limb and body—Brother, get you home!
"Your voice runs through me,—every angry word
"If he should hear it, would offend my lord."

My lord appear'd, perhaps by pity moved,
And kindly said he no such things approved,
Nay, he was angry with the foolish boy,
Who might his pleasures at his ease enjoy;
The thing was wrong—he hoped the farm did well,
The angry father doom'd the farm to hell;
He then desired to see the villain son,
Though my lord warn'd him such excess to shun;

Told him he pardon'd, though he blamed such rage,
And bade him think upon his state and age.

"Think! yes, my lord! but thinking drives me mad—
"Give me my child!—Where is she to be had?
"I'm old and poor, but I with both can feel,
"And so shall he that could a daughter steal!
"Old if I am, could I the robber meet,
"I'd lay his breathless body at my feet—
"Was that a smile, my lord? think you your boy
"Will both the father and the child destroy?"
My lord replied—"I'm sorry from my soul!
"But boys are boys, and there is no control.
"The girl has done no more than thousands do,
"Nor has the boy—they laugh at me and you."—
"And *this* my vengeance!"
Such was his redress;
And he return'd, to brood upon distress.

And what of William?—William from the time
Appear'd partaker both of grief and crime;
He cared for nothing, nothing he pursued,
But walk'd about in melancholy mood:
He ceased to labour,—all he loved before
He now neglected, and would see no more.
He said his flute brought only to his mind
When he was happy, and his Fanny kind;
And his loved walks, and every object near,
And every evening-sound she loved to hear;
The shady lane, broad heath, and starry sky,
Brought home reflections, and he wish'd to die.

At length a letter from the daughter came,
"Frances" subscribed, and that the only name;
She "pitied much her parents, spoke of fate,
"And begg'd them to forget her, not to hate;
"Said she had with her all the world could give,
"And only pray'd that they in peace should live,—
"That which is done, is that we're born to do,
"This she was taught, and she believed it true:
"True that she lived in pleasure and delight,
"But often dream'd and saw the farm by night;—
"The boarded room that she had kept so neat,
"And all her roses in the window-seat;—
"The pear-tree shade, the jasmine's lovely gloom,
"With its long twigs that blossom'd in the room;
"But she was happy, and the tears that fell
"As she was writing had no grief to tell."

A bill enclosed, that they beheld with pain
And indignation, they return'd again;
There was no mention made of William's name,
Check'd as she was by pity, love, and shame.

With their minds' sufferings, age, and growing pain,
That ancient couple could not long remain,
Nor long remain'd; and in their dying groan
The suffering youth perceived himself alone;
For of his health or sickness, peace or care,
He knew not one in all the world to share;
Now every scene would sad reflections give,
And most his home, and there he could not live.

With a small portion by a sister left
He roved about as one of peace bereft,
And by the body's movements hoped to find
A kind of wearied stillness in the mind,
And sooner bring it to a sleepy state,
As rocking infants will their pains abate.
Thus careless, lost, unheeding where he went,
Nine weary years the wandering lover spent.
His sole employment, all that could amuse,
Was his companions on the road to choose;
With such he travell'd through the passing day,
Friends of the hour, and walkers by the way;
And from the sick, the poor, the halt, the blind,
He learn'd the sorrows of his suffering kind.

He learn'd of many how unjust their fate,
For their connections dwelt in better state;
They had relations famous, great or rich,
Learned or wise, they never scrupled which;
But while they cursed these kindred churls, would try
To build their fame, and for their glory lie.

Others delighted in misfortunes strange,
The sports of Fortune in her love for change.

Some spoke of wonders they before had seen,
When on their travels they had wandering been;
How they had sail'd the world about, and found
The sailing plain, although the world was round;
How they beheld for months th' unsetting sun,
What deeds they saw! what they themselves had done!

There were who spoke in terms of high disdain
Of their contending against power in vain,
Suffering from tyranny of law long borne,
And life's best spirits in contentions worn:
Happy in this, th' oppressors soon will die,
Each with the vex'd and suffering man to lie—

But some would freely on his thoughts intrude,
And thrust themselves 'twixt him and solitude:
They would his faith and of its strength demand,
And all his soul's prime motions understand:
How! they would say, such woe and such belief,
Such trust in Heaven, and yet on earth such grief!
Thou art almost my friend,—thou art not all,
Thou hast not yet the self-destroying call;
Thou hast a carnal wish, perhaps a will
Not yet subdued,—the root is growing still:
There is the strong man yet that keeps his own,
Who by a stronger must be overthrown;
There is the burden that must yet be gone,
And then the pilgrim may go singing on.

William to this would seriously incline,
And to their comforts would his heart resign;
It soothed, it raised him,—he began to feel
Th' enlivening warmth of methodistic zeal;
He learn'd to know the brethren by their looks—
He sought their meetings, he perused their books;
But yet was not within the pale and yoke,
And as a novice of experience spoke;

But felt the comfort, and began to pray
For such companions on the king's highway.

William had now across the kingdom sped,
To th' Eastern ocean from St. David's Head;
And wandering late, with various thoughts oppress'd,
'Twas midnight ere he reach'd his place of rest,—
A village inn, that one wayfaring friend
Could from experience safely recommend,
Where the kind hostess would be more intent
On what he needed than on what he spent;
Her husband, once a heathen, she subdued,
And with religious fear his mind imbued;
Though his conviction came too late to save
An erring creature from an early grave.

Since that event, the cheerful widow grew
In size and substance,—her the brethren knew—
And many friends were hers, and lovers not a few;
But either love no more could warm her heart,
Or no man came who could the warmth impart.

William drew near, and saw the comely look
Of the good lady, bending o'er her book;
Hymns it appear'd,—for now a pleasing sound
Seem'd as a welcome in his wanderings found.

The traveller entered softly,—and their eyes
Met in good-will, and something like surprise:
It was not beauty William saw, but more,
Something like that which he had loved before—
Something that brought his Fanny to his view,
In the dear time when she was good and true;

And his, it seem'd, were features that were seen
With some emotion—she was not serene:
And both were moved to ask what looks like those
could mean.
At first she colour'd to the deepest red,
That hurried off, till all the rose was fled;
She call'd a servant, whom she sent to rest,
Then made excuse to her attentive guest;
She own'd the thoughts confused,—'twas very true,
He brought a dear departed friend in view:
Then, as he listen'd, bade him welcome there
With livelier looks and more engaging air,
And stirr'd the fire of ling, and brush'd the wicker
chair,
Waiting his order with the cheerful look,
That proved how pleasant were the pains she took.

He was refresh'd.—They spake on various themes—
Our early pleasures, Reason's first-drawn schemes,
Youth's strong illusions, Love's delirious dreams:
Then from her book he would presume to ask
A song of praise, and she perform'd the task:
The clock struck twelve.—He started—"Must I
go?"
His looks spoke plainly, and the lady's, "No:"
So down he sat,—and when the clock struck one
There was no start, no effort to be gone:
Nor stay'd discourse.
"And so your loves were cross'd,
"And the loved object to your wishes lost?
"But was she faithless, or were you to blame?
"I wish I knew her—Will you tell her name?"

"Excuse me—that would hurt her if alive;
"And, if no more, why should her fault survive?'

"But love you still?"—
"Alas! I feel I do,
"When I behold her very looks in you!"

"Yet, if the frail one's name must not be known,
"My friendly guest may trust me with his own."

This done, the lady paused, and then replied,—
"It grieves me much to see your spirit tried;—
"But she was like me,—how I came to know
"The lamb that stray'd I will hereafter show;—
"We were indeed as sisters.—Should I state
"Her quiet end, you would no longer hate:
"I see your heart,—and I shall quickly prove,
"Though she deserved not, yet she prized your love.

"Weep not, but hear me, how I came to know
"Thee and thy Frances—this to Heaven I owe;
"And thou shalt view the pledge, the very ring,
"The birthday token—well you know the thing;
"'This,' if I ever—thus I was to speak,
"As she had spoken—but I see you weak:
"She was not worthy——"
"O! you cannot tell
"By what accursed means my Fanny fell!
"Force, not persuasion, robb'd me——"
"You are right;
"So has she told me, in her Maker's sight:

"She loved not vice——"
"O no,—her heart approved
"All that her God commanded to be loved;
"And she is gone——"
"Consider! death alone
"Could for the errors of her life atone."

"Speak not of them; I would she knew how dear
"I hold her yet!—But dost thou give the tear
"To my loved Frances?—No! I cannot part
"With one who has her face, who has her heart;
"Then tell me—Art thou not—in pity speak—
"One whom I sought, while living meant to seek—
"Art thou my Fanny?—Let me not offend,—
"Be something to me—be a sufferer's friend—
"Be more—be all!—The precious truth confess—
"Art thou not Frances?"—
"O my William! yes!
"But spare me, spare thyself, and suffer less:
"In my best days, the spring-time of my life,
"I was not worthy to be William's wife;
"A widow now—not poor, indeed—not cast
"In outer darkness—sorrowing for the past,
"And for the future hoping—but no more:
"Let me the pledges of thy love restore,
"And give the ring thou gavest—let it be
"A token still of my regard for thee,
"But only that,—and to a worthier now
"Consign the gift."—
"The only worthy thou!"
Replied the lover; and what more express'd
May be omitted—here our tale shall rest.

This pair, our host and hostess of the Fleece,
Command some wealth, and smile at its increase;
Saving and civil, cautious and discreet,
All sects and parties in their mansion meet;
There from their chapels teachers go to share
The creature-comforts,—mockery grins not there;
There meet the wardens at their annual feast,
With annual pun—"the parish must be fleeced;"
There traders find a parlour cleanly swept
For their reception, and in order kept;
And there the sons of labour, poor, but free,
Sit and enjoy their hour of liberty.

So live the pair,—and life's disasters seem
In their unruffled calm a troubled dream.

ELLEN

RIDE you this fair cool morning?" said the Squire:
"Do—for a purchase I have made inquire,
"And with you take a will complacently t' admire:
"Southward at first, dear Richard, make your way,
"Cross Hilton Bridge, move on through Breken Clay,
"At Dunham Wood turn duly to the east,
"And there your eyes upon the ocean feast;
"Then ride above the cliff, or ride below,
"You'll be enraptured, for your taste I know;
"It is a prospect that a man might stay
"To his bride hastening on his wedding-day;
"At Tilburn Sluice once more ascend, and view
"A decent house; an ample garden too,
"And planted well behind—a lively scene, and new;
"A little taste, a little pomp, display'd
"By a dull man, who had retired from trade
"To enjoy his leisure—Here he came prepared
"To farm, nor cost in preparation spared;
"But many works he purchased, some he read,
"And often rose with projects in his head,
"Of crops in courses raised, of herds by matching bred.
"We had just found these little humours out,
"Just saw—he saw not—what he was about;

"Just met as neighbours, still disposed to meet,
"Just learn'd the current tales of Dowling Street,
"And were just thinking of our female friends,
"Saying—'You know not what the man intends,
"'A rich, kind, hearty'—and it might be true
"Something he wish'd, but had not time to do;
"A cold ere yet the falling leaf! of small
"Effect till then, was fatal in the fall;—
"And of that house was his possession brief—
"Go; and guard well against the falling leaf.

"But hear me, Richard, looking to my ease,
"Try if you can find something that will please;
"Faults if you see, and such as must abide,
"Say they are small, or say that I can hide;
"But faults that I can change, remove, or mend,
"These like a foe detect—or like a friend.

"Mark well the rooms, and their proportions learn,
"In each some use, some elegance discern;
"Observe the garden, its productive wall,
"And find a something to commend in all;
"Then should you praise them in a knowing way,
"I'll take it kindly—that is well—be gay;*
"Nor pass the pebbled cottage as you rise
"Above the sluice, till you have fix'd your eyes
"On the low woodbined window, and have seen,
"So fortune favour you, the ghost within;
"Take but one look, and then your way pursue,
"It flies all strangers, and it knows not you."

* This was the house which the elder brother George designed to give to Richard.

Richard return'd, and by his Brother stood,
Not in a pensive, not in pleasant mood;
But by strong feeling into stillness wrought,
As nothing thinking, or with too much thought;
Or like a man who means indeed to speak,
But would his hearer should his purpose seek.

When George—"What is it, Brother, you would hide?
"Or what confess?"—"Who is she?" he replied,
"That angel whom I saw, to whom is she allied?
"Of this fair being let me understand,
"And I will praise your purchase, house and land.

"Hers was that cottage on the rising ground,
"West of the waves, and just beyond their sound;
"Fair, fragile thing! I said, when first my eye
"Caught hers, wilt thou expand thy wings and fly?
"Or wilt thou vanish? beauteous spirit, stay!—
"For will it not (I question'd) melt away?
"No! it was mortal—I unseen was near,
"And saw the bosom's sigh, the standing tear!
"She thought profoundly, for I stay'd to look,
"And first she read, then laid aside her book;
"Then on her hand reclined her lovely head,
"And seem'd unconscious of the tear she shed.

"'Art thou so much,' I said, 'to grief a prey?'
"Till pity pain'd me, and I rode away.

"Tell me, my Brother, is that sorrow dread
"For the great change that bears her to the dead?

"Has she connections? does she love?—I feel
"Pity and grief: wilt thou her woes reveal?"

"They are not lasting, Richard, they are woes
"Chastised and meek! she sings them to repose;
"If not, she reasons; if they still remain,
"She finds resource, that none shall find in vain.

"Whether disease first grew upon regret,
"Or nature gave it, is uncertain yet,
"And must remain; the frame was slightly made,
"That grief assail'd, and all is now decay'd!

"But though so willing from the world to part,
"I must not call her case a broken heart:
"Nor dare I take upon me to maintain
"That hearts once broken never heal again."

She was an only daughter, one whose sire
Loved not that girls to knowledge should aspire;
But he had sons, and Ellen quickly caught
Whatever they were by their masters taught;
This, when the father saw—"It is the turn
"Of her strange mind," said he, "but let her learn;
"'Tis almost pity with that shape and face—
"But is a fashion, and brings no disgrace;
"If such her mind, I shall in vain oppose;
"If not, her labours of themselves will close."

Ellen, 'twas found, had skill without pretence,
And silenced envy by her meek good sense;

That Ellen learnt, her various knowledge proved;
Soft words and tender looks, that Ellen loved;
For he who taught her brothers found in her
A constant, ready, eager auditor;
This he perceived, nor could his joy disguise,
It tuned his voice, it sparkled in his eyes.

Not very young, nor very handsome he,
But very fit an Abelard to be;
His manner and his meekness hush'd alarm
In all but Ellen—Ellen felt the charm;
Hers was fond "filial love," she found delight
To have her mind's dear father in her sight;
But soon the borrow'd notion she resign'd!
He was no father—even to the mind.

But Ellen had her comforts—"He will speak,"
She said, "for he beholds me fond and weak;
"Fond, and he therefore may securely plead,—
"Weak, I have therefore of his firmness need;
"With whom my father will his Ellen trust,
"Because he knows him to be kind and just."

Alas! too well the conscious lover knew
The parent's mind, and well the daughter's too.
Ever of her and her frank heart afraid,
Doubting himself, he sought in absence, aid,
And had resolved on flight, but still the act delay'd.

Thus as he thought, his Ellen at his side
Her soothing softness to his grief applied;

With like effect as water cast on flame,
For he more heated and confused became,
And broke in sorrow from the wondering maid,
Who was at once offended and afraid;
Yet "Do not go!" she cried, and was awhile obey'd.
"Art thou then ill, dear friend?" she ask'd, and took
His passive hand—"How very pale thy look!
"And thou art cold, and tremblest—pray thee tell
"Thy friend, thy Ellen, is her master well?"

"Nay, my dear lady! we have all our cares,
"And I am troubled with my poor affairs:
"Thou canst not aid me, Ellen; could it be
"And might it, doubtless, I would fly to thee;
"But we have sundry duties, and must all,
"Hard as it may be, go where duties call—
"Suppose the trial were this instant thine,
"Could'st thou the happiest of thy views resign
"At duty's strong command?"—"If thou wert by,"
Said the unconscious maiden, "I would try!"—
And as she sigh'd she heard the soft responsive sigh.

And then assuming steadiness, "Adieu!"
He cried, and from the grieving Ellen flew;
And to her father with a bleeding heart
He went, his grief and purpose to impart;
Told of his health, and did in part confess
That he should love the noble maiden less.

The parent's pride to sudden rage gave way—
"And the girl loves! that plainly you would say—
"And you with honour, in your pride, retire!—
"Sir, I your prudence envy and admire."

But here the father saw the rising frown,
And quickly let his lofty spirit down.

"Forgive a parent!—I may well excuse
"A girl who could perceive such worth, and choose
"To make it hers; we must not look to meet
"All we might wish;—Is age itself discreet?"

Then with the kindness worldly minds assume,
He praised the self-pronounced and rigorous doom;
He wonder'd not that one so young should love,
And much he wish'd he could the choice approve;
Much he lamented such a mind to lose,
And begg'd to learn if he could aid his views,
If such were form'd—then closed the short account,
And to a shilling paid the full amount.

So Cecil left the mansion, and so flew
To foreign shores, without an interview;
He must not say, I love—he could not say, Adieu!

A friend in England gave him all the news,
A sad indulgence that he would not lose;
He told how Ellen suffer'd, how they sent
The maid from home in sullen discontent,
With some relation on the Lakes to live,
In all the sorrow such retirements give;
And there she roved among the rocks, and took
Moss from the stone, and pebbles from the brook;
Gazed on the flies that settled on the flowers,
And so consumed her melancholy hours.

Again he wrote—The father then was dead,
And Ellen to her native village fled,
With native feeling—there she oped her door,
Her heart, her purse, and comforted the poor,
The sick, the sad,—and there she pass'd her days,
Deserving much, but never seeking praise,
Her task to guide herself, her joy the fallen to raise
Nor would she nicely faults and merits weigh,
But loved the impulse of her soul t' obey;
The prayers of all she heard, their sufferings view'd,
Nor turn'd from any, save when Love pursued;
For though to love disposed, to kindness prone,
She thought of Cecil, and she lived alone.

Thus heard the lover of the life she pass'd
Till his return,—and he return'd at last;
For he had saved, and was a richer man
Than when to teach and study he began;
Something his father left, and he could fly
To the lov'd country where he wish'd to die.

"And now," he said, "this maid with gentle mind
"May I not hope to meet, as good, as kind,
"As in the days when first her friend she knew
"And then could trust—and he indeed is true?
"She knew my motives, and she must approve
"The man who dared to sacrifice his love
"And fondest hopes to virtue: virtuous she,
"Nor can resent that sacrifice in me."

He reason'd thus, but fear'd, and sought the friend
In his own country, where his doubts must end;

They then together to her dwelling came,
And by a servant sent her lover's name,
A modest youth, whom she before had known,
His favourite then, and doubtless *then* her own.

They in the carriage heard the servants speak
At Ellen's door—"A maid so heavenly meek,
"Who would all pain extinguish! Yet will she
"Pronounce my doom, I feel the certainty!"—
"Courage!" the friend exclaim'd, "the lover's fear
"Grows without ground;" but Cecil would not hear;
He seem'd some dreadful object to explore,
And fix'd his fearful eye upon the door,
Intensely longing for reply—the thing
That must to him his future fortune bring;
And now it brought! like Death's cold hand it came—
"The lady was a stranger to the name!"
Backward the lover in the carriage fell,
Weak, but not fainting—"All," said he, "is well!
"Return with me—I have no more to seek!"
And this was all the woeful man would speak.

Quickly he settled all his worldly views,
And sail'd from home, his fiercer pains to lose
And nurse the milder—now with labour less
He might his solitary world possess,
And taste the bitter-sweet of love in idleness.

Greece was the land he chose; a mind decay'd
And ruin'd there through glorious ruin stray'd,
There read, and walk'd, and mused,—there loved,
and wept, and pray'd.

Nor would he write, nor suffer hope to live,
But gave to study all his mind could give;
Till, with the dead conversing, he began
To lose the habits of a living man,
Save that he saw some wretched, them he tried
To soothe,—some doubtful, them he strove to guide;
Nor did he lose the mind's ennobling joy
Of that new state that death must not destroy;
What Time had done we know not,—Death was nigh,
To his first hopes the lover gave a sigh,
But hopes more new and strong confirm'd his wish
to die.

Meantime poor Ellen in her cottage thought
"That he would seek her—sure she should be sought;
"She did not mean—It was an evil hour,
"Her thoughts were guardless, and beyond her
power;
"And for one speech, and that in rashness made!
"Have I no friend to soothe him and persuade?
"Has he no friend to tell him that our pride
"Resents a moment and is satisfied?"

No Cecil came!—"Come, peevish and unjust!"
Sad Ellen cried, "why cherish this disgust?
"Thy Ellen's voice could charm thee once, but thou
"Canst nothing see or hear of Ellen now!"

Yes! she was right; the grave on him was closed,
And there the lover and the friend reposed.
The news soon reach'd her, and she then replied
In his own manner—"I am satisfied!"

To her a lover's legacy is paid,
The darling wealth of the devoted maid;
From this her best and favourite books she buys,
From this are doled the favourite charities;
And when a tale or face affects her heart,
This is the fund that must relief impart.

Such have the ten last years of Ellen been!
Her very last that sunken eye has seen!
That half-angelic being still must fade
Till all the angel in the mind be made;—
And though she prays not with the dying now,
She teaches them to die, and shows them how.

"Such is my tale, dear Richard, but that told
"I must all comments on the text withhold;
"What is the sin of grief I cannot tell,
"Nor of the sinners who have loved too well;
"But to the cause of mercy I incline,
"Or, O my Brother, what a fate is mine!"

HENRY AND EMMA

OR

THE NATURAL DEATH OF LOVE

LOVE has slow death and sudden: wretches prove
"That fate severe—the sudden death of love;
"Others there are with whom love dies away
"In gradual waste and unperceived decay;
"Such is that death of love that nature finds
"Most fitted for the use of common minds,
"The natural death; but doubtless there are some
"Who struggle hard when they perceive it come;
"Loth to be loved no longer, loth to prove
"To the once dear that they no longer love:
"And some with not successless arts will strive
"To keep the weak'ning, fluttering flame alive.
"But see my verse; in this I try to paint
"The passion failing, fading to complaint,
"The gathering grief for joys remember'd yet,
"The vain remonstrance, and the weak regret:
"First speaks the wife in sorrow, she is grieved
"T' admit the truth, and would be still deceived."

E. Well, my good sir, I shall contend no more;
But, O the vows you made, the oaths you swore—

H. To love you always:—I confess it true;
And do I not? If not, what can I do?
Moreover, think what you yourself profess'd,
And then the subject may for ever rest.

E. Yes, sir, obedience I profess'd; I know
My debt, and wish to pay you all I owe,
Pay without murmur; but that vow was made
To you who said it never should be paid;—
Now truly tell me why you took such care
To make me err? I ask'd you not to swear,
But rather hoped you would my mind direct,
And say, when married, what you would expect.

You may remember—it is not so long
Since you affirm'd that I could not be wrong;
I told you then—you recollect, I told
The very truth—that humour would not hold;
Not that I thought, or ever could suppose,
The mighty raptures were so soon to close.

Do you remember how you used to hang
Upon my looks? your transports when I sang?
I play'd—you melted into tears; I moved—
Voice, words, and motion, how you all approved;
A time when Emma reign'd, a time when Henry
loved:
You recollect?

H. Yes, surely; and then why
The needless truths? do I the facts deny?
For this remonstrance I can see no need,
Or this impatience—if you do, proceed.

E. O! that is now so cool, and with a smile
That sharpens insult—I detest the style;
And, now I talk of styles, with what delight
You read my lines—I then, it seems, could write:
In short, when I was present, you could see,
But one dear object, and you lived for me;
And now, sir, what your pleasure? Let me dress,
Sing, speak, or write, and you your sense express
Of my poor taste—my words are not correct;
In all I do is failing or defect—
And what can such dissatisfaction prove?
I tell you, Henry, you have ceased to love.

H. I own it not; but if a truth it be,
It is the fault of nature, not of me.
Remember you, my love, the fairy tale,
Where the young pairs were spellbound in the vale?
When all around them gay or glorious seem'd,
And of bright views and ceaseless joys they dream'd

Till, melting into truth, the vision fled,
And there came miry roads and thorny ways instead?

Such was our fate, my charmer! we were found
A wandering pair, by roguish Cupid bound;
There was that purple light of love, that bloom,
That ardent passions in their growth assume.

Nor they alone were charming; by that light
All loved of thee grew lovely in my sight.
You went the church-way walk, you reach'd the farm,
And gave the grass and babbling springs a charm;
Crop, whom you rode,—sad rider though you be,—
Thenceforth was more than Pegasus to me:
Have I not woo'd your snarling cur to bend
To me the paw and greeting of a friend?
And all his surly ugliness forgave,
Because, like me, he was my Emma's slave?
Think you, thus charm'd, I would the spell revoke?
Alas! my love, we married, and it broke!

E. O sir, this boyish tale is mighty well,
But 'twas your falsehood that destroy'd the spell:
Speak not of nature, 'tis an evil mind
That makes you to accustom'd beauties blind;
You seek the faults yourself, and then complain you find.

H. I sought them not; but, madam, 'tis in vain
The course of love and nature to restrain:

Lo! when the buds expand the leaves are green,
Then the first opening of the flower is seen;
Then comes the honeyed breath and rosy smile,
That with their sweets the willing sense beguile;
But, as we look, and love, and taste, and praise,
And the fruit grows, the charming flower decays;
Till all is gather'd, and the wintry blast
Moans o'er the place of love and pleasure past.

So 'tis with beauty—such the opening grace
And dawn of glory in the youthful face;
Then are the charms unfolded to the sight,
Then all is loveliness and all delight;
The nuptial tie succeeds the genial hour,
And, lo! the falling off of beauty's flower;
So, through all nature is the progress made,—
The bud, the bloom, the fruit,—and then we fade.

Then sigh no more,—we might as well retain
The year's gay prime as bid that love remain,
That fond, delusive, happy, transient spell,
That hides us from a world wherein we dwell.

E. O! much I fear! I practised no deceit,
Such as I am I saw you at my feet:
If for a goddess you a girl would take,
'Tis you yourself the disappointment make.

H. And I alone?—O Emma, when I pray'd
For grace from thee, transported and afraid,
Now raised to rapture, now to terror doom'd,
Was not the goddess by the girl assumed?

Did not my Emma use her skill to hide—
Let us be frank—her weakness and her pride?
Did she not all her sex's arts pursue,
To bring the angel forward to my view?
Was not the rising anger oft suppress'd?
Was not the waking passion hush'd to rest?
And when so mildly sweet you look'd and spoke,
Did not the woman deign to wear a cloak?
A cloak she wore, or, though not clear my sight,
I might have seen her—think you not I might?

E. O! this is glorious!—while your passion lives,
To the loved maid a robe of grace it gives;
And then, unjust! beholds her with surprise,
Unrobed, ungracious, when the passion dies.

H. For this, my Emma, I to Heaven appeal,
I felt entirely what I seem'd to feel;
Thou wert all precious in my sight, to me
The being angels are supposed to be;
And am I now of my deception told,
Because I'm doom'd a woman to behold?

E. Sir! in few words, I would a question ask—
Mean these reproaches that I wore a mask?
Mean you that I by art or caution tried
To show a virtue, or a fault to hide?

H. I will obey you.—When you seem'd to feel
Those books we read, and praised them with such zeal,
Approving all that certain friends approved,
Was it the pages or the praise you loved?

Nay, do not frown—I much rejoiced to find
Such early judgment in such gentle mind;
But, since we married, have you deign'd to look
On the grave subjects of one favourite book?

Nay, hear me further.—When we view'd that dell,
Where lie those ruins—you must know it well—
When that worn pediment your walk delay'd,
And the stream gushing through the arch decay'd;
When at the venerable pile you stood,
Till the does ventured on our solitude,
Tell me, was all the feeling you express'd
The genuine feeling of my Emma's breast?
Or was it borrow'd? Of that lovely scene
The married Emma has no witness been;
No more beheld that water, falling, flow
Through the green fern that there delights to grow.

Once more permit me——Well, I know, you feel
For suffering men, and would their sufferings heal,
But when at certain huts you chose to call,
At certain seasons, was compassion all?
I there beheld thee, to the wretched dear
As angels to expiring saints appear
When whispering hope—I saw an infant press'd
And hush'd to slumber on my Emma's breast!
Hush'd be each rude suggestion!—Well I know
With a free hand your bounty you bestow;
And to these objects frequent comforts send,
But still they see not now their pitying friend.

E. O! precious are you all, and prizes too,
Or could we take such guilty pains for you?

Believe it not—As long as passion lasts,
A charm about the chosen maid it casts;
And the poor girl has little more to do
Than just to keep in sight as you pursue:
Chance to a ruin leads her; you behold,
And straight the angel of her taste is told;
Chance to a cottage leads you, and you trace
A virtuous pity in the angel's face;
She reads a work you chance to recommend,
And likes it well—at least, she likes the friend;
But when it chances this no more is done,
She has not left one virtue—no! not one!

But be it said, good sir, we use such art,
Is it not done to hold a fickle heart,
And fix a roving eye? Is that design
Shameful or wicked that would keep you mine?
Then when you flatter—in your language praise,
In our own view you must our value raise;
And must we not, to this mistaken man,
Appear as like his picture as we can?
If you will call—nay, treat us as divine,
Must we not something to your thoughts incline?
If men of sense will worship whom they love,
Think you the idol will the error prove?
What! show him all her glory is pretence,
And make an idiot of this man of sense?

Then, too, suppose we should his praise refuse,
And clear his mind, we may our lover lose;
In fact, you make us more than nature makes,
And we, no doubt, consent to your mistakes;

You will, we know, until the frenzy cools,
Enjoy the transient paradise of fools ;
But fancy fled, you quit the blissful state,
And truth for ever bars the golden gate.

H. True ! but how ill each other to upbraid,
'Tis not our fault that we no longer staid ;
No sudden fate our lingering love suppress'd,
It died an easy death, and calmly sank to rest :
To either sex is the delusion lent,
And when it fails us, we should rest content,
'Tis cruel to reproach, when bootless to repent.

E. Then wise the lovers who consent to wait,
And always lingering, never try the state ;
But hurried on, by what they call their pain,
And I their bliss, no longer they refrain ;
To ease that pain, to lose that bliss, they run
To the church magi, and the thing is done ;
A spell is utter'd, and a ring applied,
And forth they walk a bridegroom and a bride,
To find this counter-charm, this marriage rite,
Has put their present fallacies to flight !
But tell me, Henry, should we truly strive,
May we not bid the happy dream revive ?

H. Alas ! they say when weakness or when vice
Expels a foolish pair from Paradise,
The guardian power to prayer has no regard,
The knowledge once obtain'd, the gate is barr'd ;
Or could we enter we should still repine,
Unless we could the knowledge too resign.

Yet let us calmly view our present fate,
And make a humbler Eden of our state ;
With this advantage, that what now we gain,
Experience gives, and prudence will retain.
What we beheld in Love's perspective glass
Has pass'd away—one sigh ! and let it pass—
It was a blissful vision, and it fled,
And we must get some actual good instead :
Of good and evil that we daily find,—
That we must hoard, *this* banish from the mind ;
Then, though we backward look with some regret
On those first joys, we shall be happy yet.
Each on the other must in all depend,
The kind adviser, the unfailing friend ;
Through the rough world we must each other aid,
Leading and led, obeying and obey'd.

Nor doubt, my Emma, but in many an hour
Fancy, who sleeps, shall wake with all her power ;
And we shall pass – though not perhaps remain –
To fairy-land, and feel its charm again.

THE SHELLEYS

THERE was a Widow in the village known
To our good Squire, and he had favour shown
By frequent bounty.—She as usual came,
And Richard saw the worn and weary frame,
Pale cheek, and eye subdued, of her whose mind
Was grateful still, and glad a friend to find,
Though to the world long since and all its hopes resign'd:
Her easy form, in rustic neatness clad,
Was pleasing still! but she for ever sad.

"Deep is her grief!" said Richard, — "truly deep,
"And very still, and therefore seems to sleep;
"To borrow simile, to paint her woes,
"Theirs, like the river's motion, seems repose,
"Making no petty murmuring,—settled slow,
"They never waste, they never overflow.
"Rachel is one of those—for there are some
"Who look for nothing in their days to come,
"No good nor evil, neither hope nor fear,
"Nothing remains or cheerful or severe;
"One day is like the past, the year's sweet prime
"Like the sad fall,—for Rachel heeds not time:

"Nothing remains to agitate her breast,
"Spent is the tempest, and the sky at rest;
"But while it raged her peace its ruin met,
"And now the sun is on her prospects set;—
"Leave her, and let us her distress explore,
"She heeds it not—she has been left before."

There were two lads call'd Shelley hither brought,
But whence we know not—it was never sought;
Their wandering mother left them, left her name,
And the boys throve and valiant men became:
Handsome, of more than common size, and tall,
And, no one's kindred, seem'd beloved of all.
One was call'd James, the more sedate and grave,
The other Robert—names their neighbours gave;
They both were brave, but Robert loved to run
And meet his danger—James would rather shun
The dangerous trial, but whenever tried
He all his spirit to the act applied.

Robert would aid on any man bestow,
James would his man and the occasion know;
For that was quick and prompt—this temperate and slow.
Robert would all things he desired pursue,
James would consider what was best to do;
All spoke of Robert as a man they loved,
And most of James as valued and approved.

Both had some learning: Robert his acquired
By quicker parts, and was by praise inspired;
James, as he was in his acquirements slow,
Would learn the worth of what he tried to know.
In fact, this youth was generous—that was just;
The one you loved, the other you would trust.

Such were the brothers—James had found his way
To Nether Hall, and there inclined to stay;
He could himself command, and therefore could obey:
He with the keeper took his daily round,
A rival grew, and some unkindness found;
But his superior farm'd! the place was void,
And James guns, dogs, and dignity enjoy'd.

Robert had scorn of service: he would be
A slave to no man—happy were the free,
And only they;—by such opinions led,
Robert to sundry kinds of trade was bred;
Nor let us wonder if he sometimes made
An active partner in a lawless trade;
Fond of adventure, wanton as the wave,
He loved the danger and the law to brave;
But these were chance adventures, known to few,—
Not that the hero cared what people knew.

The brothers met not often—When they met
James talk'd of honest gains and scorn of debt,
Of virtuous labour, of a sober life,
And what with credit would support a wife.

But Robert answer'd,—" How can men advise
" Who to a master let their tongue and eyes?
" Whose words are not their own? whose foot and hand
" Run at a nod, or act upon command?
" Who cannot eat or drink, discourse or play,
" Without requesting others that they may?
" Debt you would shun; but what advice to give
" Who owe your service every hour you live!
" Let a bell sound, and from your friends you run,
" Although the darling of your heart were one;
" But if the bondage fits you, I resign
" You to your lot—I am content with mine!"

Thus would the Lads their sentiments express,
And part in earnest, part in playfulness;
Till Love, controller of all hearts and eyes,
Breaker of bonds, of friendship's holy ties,
Awakener of new wills and slumbering sympathies,
Began his reign, —till Rachel, meek-eyed maid,
That form, those cheeks, that faultless face display'd,
That child of gracious nature, ever neat
And never fine; a flow'ret simply sweet,
Seeming at least unconscious she was fair;
Meek in her spirit, timid in her air,
And shrinking from his glance if one presumed
To come too near the beauty as it bloom'd.

Robert beheld her in her father's cot
Day after day, and bless'd his happy lot;
He look'd indeed, but he could not offend
By gentle looks—he was her father's friend:

She was accustom'd to that tender look,
And frankly gave the hand he fondly took;
She loved his stories, pleased she heard him play,
Pensive herself, she loved to see him gay,
And if they loved not yet, they were in Love's high-
way.

But Rachel now to womanhood was grown,
And would no more her faith and fondness own;
She call'd her latent prudence to her aid,
And grew observant, cautious, and afraid;
She heard relations of her lover's guile,
And could believe the danger of his smile:
With art insidious rival damsels strove
To show how false his speech, how feign'd his love;
And though her heart another story told,
Her speech grew cautious, and her manner cold.

Rachel had village fame, was fair and tall,
And gain'd a place of credit at the Hall;
Where James beheld her seated in that place,
With a child's meekness, and an angel's face;
Her temper soft, her spirit firm, her words
Simple and few as simple truth affords.

James could but love her,—he at church had seen
The tall, fair maid, had met her on the green,
Admiring always, not surprised to find
Her figure often present to his mind;
But now he saw her daily, and the sight
Gave him new pleasure and increased delight.

But James, still prudent and reserved, though sure
The love he felt was love that would endure,
Would wait awhile, observing what was fit,
And meet, and right, nor would himself commit.

Robert was now deprived of that delight
He once experienced in his mistress' sight;
For, though he now his frequent visits paid,
He saw but little of the cautious maid:
The simple common pleasures that he took
Grew dull, and he the wonted haunts forsook;
His flute and song he left, his book and pen,
And sought the meetings of adventurous men;
There was a love-born sadness in his breast,
That wanted stimulus to bring on rest;
These simple pleasures were no more of use,
And danger only could repose produce;
He join'd th' associates in their lawless trade,
And was at length of their profession made.

He saw connected with th' adventurous crew
Those whom he judged were sober men and true;
He found that some, who should the trade prevent,
Gave it by purchase their encouragement;
He found that contracts could be made with those
Who had their pay these dealers to oppose;
And the good ladies whom at church he saw
With looks devout, of reverence and awe,
Could change their feelings as they change their place,
And, whispering, deal for spicery and lace:
And thus the craft and avarice of these
Urged on the youth, and gave his conscience ease.

Him loved the maiden Rachel, fondly loved,
As many a sigh and tear in absence proved,
And many a fear for dangers that she knew,
And many a doubt what one so gay might do:
Of guilt she thought not,—she had often heard
They bought and sold, and nothing wrong appear'd;
Her father's maxim this: she understood
There was some ill,—but he, she knew, was good:
It was a traffic—but was done by night—
If wrong, how trade? why secrecy, if right?
But Robert's conscience, she believed, was pure—
And that he read his Bible she was sure.

James, better taught, in confidence declared
His grief for what his guilty brother dared:
He sigh'd to think how near he was akin
To one reduced by godless men to sin;
Who, being always of the law in dread,
To other crimes were by the danger led.

And now, their love avow'd, in both arose
Fear and disdain—the orphan pair were foes.
Robert, more generous of the two, avow'd
His scorn, defiance, and contempt aloud.
James talk'd of pity in a softer tone,
To Rachel speaking, and with her alone:
He knew full well, he said, to what must come
His wretched brother, what would be his doom:
Thus he her bosom fenced with dread about;
But love he could not with his skill drive out.
Still he affected something,—and that skill
Made the love wretched, though it could not kill.

Thus they proceeded, till a winter came,
When the stern keeper told of stolen game:
Throughout the woods the poaching dogs had been,
And from him nothing should the robbers screen,
From him and law,—he would all hazards run,
Nor spare a poacher, were his brother one.
Poor Rachel shudder'd,—smuggling she could name
Without confusion, for she felt not shame;
But poachers were her terror, and a wood
Which they frequented had been mark'd by blood;
And though she thought her Robert was secure
In better thoughts, yet could she not be sure.

Fresh aid was sought,—and on a certain night
A few were seized—the rest escaped by flight;
Yet they resisted boldly ere they fled,
And blows were dealt around, and blood was shed;
Then four determined men were seized and bound,
And Robert in this desperate number found.

James was a favourite with his lord,—the zeal
He show'd was such as masters ever feel:
If he for vengeance on a culprit cried,
Or if for mercy, still his lord complied;
And now, 'twas said, he will for mercy plead,
For his own brother's was the guilty deed:
True, the hurt man is in a mending way,
But must be crippled to his dying day.

Now James had vow'd the law should take its course,
He would not stay it, if he did not force;

He could his witness, if he pleased, withdraw,
Or he could arm with certain death the law.

How suffer'd then that maid,—no thought she had,
No view of days to come, that was not sad;
He now must die, she heard from every tongue—
Die, and so thoughtless! perish, and so young!
Brave, kind, and generous, tender, constant, true,
And he must die—then will I perish too!

James knew his power—his feelings were not nice—
Mercy he sold, and she must pay the price:
If his good lord forbore to urge their fate,
And he the utmost of their guilt to state,
The felons might their forfeit lives redeem,
And in their country's cause regain esteem;
But never more that man, whom he had shame
To call his brother, must she see or name.

Rachel was meek, but she had firmness too,
And reason'd much on what she ought to do:
In Robert's place, she knew what she should choose—
But life was not the thing she fear'd to lose:
But he was man, and guilty,—death so near
Might not to his as to her mind appear;
And he might wish, to spare that forfeit life,
The maid he loved might be his brother's wife,
Although that brother was his bitter foe,
And he must all the sweets of life forego.

This would she try,—intent on this alone,
She could assume a calm and settled tone;

She spake with firmness,—"I will Robert see,
"Know what he wishes, and what I must be."

She saw him fetter'd, full of grief, alone,
Still as the dead, and he suppress'd a groan
At her appearance—Now she pray'd for strength;
And the sad couple could converse at length.
It was a scene that shook her to repeat,—
Life fought with love, both powerful, and both sweet.

"Wilt thou die, Robert, or preserve thy life?
"Shall I be thine own maid, or James's wife?"

"His wife! —No!—never will I thee resign—
"No, Rachel, no!" "Then am I ever thine:
"I know thee rash and guilty, —but to thee
"I pledged my vow, and thine will ever be:
"Yet think again,—the life that God has lent
"Is thine, but not to cast away.—Consent,
"If 'tis thy wish; for this I made my way
"To thy distress—Command, and I obey."

"Perhaps my brother may have gain'd thy heart!"
"Then why this visit, if I wished to part?
"But I forgive,—thy spirit has been tried,
"And thou art weak, but still thou must decide.

"I ask'd thy brother, 'James, would'st thou command,
"'Without the loving heart, the obedient hand?'
"I ask *thee*, Robert, lover, canst thou part
"With this poor hand, when master of the heart?—

"*He* answer'd, Yes!—I tarry *thy* reply,
"Resign'd with him to live, content with thee to die."

Assured of this, with spirits low and tame,
Here life so purchased—there a death of shame;
Death once his merriment, but now his dread,
And he with terror thought upon the dead:
"O! sure 'tis better to endure the care
"And pain of life, than go we know not where.—
"Forgive me, love! it is a loathsome thing
"To live not thine; but still this dreaded sting
"Of death torments me,—I to nature cling.—
"Go, and be his—but love him not, be sure—
"Go, love him not,—and I will life endure:
"He, too, is mortal!"—Rachel deeply sigh'd,
But would no more converse: she had complied,
And was no longer free—she was his brother's bride.

"Farewell!" she said, with kindness, but not fond,
Feeling the pressure of the recent bond,
And put her tenderness apart to give
Advice to one who so desired to live:
She then departed, join'd the attending guide,
Reflected—wept—was sad—was satisfied.

James on her worth and virtue could depend,—
He listen'd gladly to her story's end:
Again he promised Robert's life to save,
And claim'd the hand that she in payment gave.

Robert, when death no longer was in view,
Scorn'd what was done, but could not this undo:

The day appointed for the trial near
He view'd with shame, and not unmix'd with fear,—
James might deceive him; and, if not, the schemes
Of men may fall.—Can I depend on James?

He might; for now the grievous price was paid—
James to the altar led the victim maid,
And gave the trembling girl his faithful word
For Robert's safety, and so gave my lord.

But this, and all the promise hope could give,
Gilded not life,—it was not joy to live;
There was no smile in Rachel, nothing gay,
The hours pass'd off, but never danced away.
When drew the gloomy day for trial near,
There came a note to Robert,—"Banish fear!"

He knew whence safety came,—his terror fled,
But rage and vengeance fill'd his soul instead.

A stronger fear in his companions rose
The day of trial on their hopes might close:
They had no brothers, none to intercede
For them, their friends suspected, and in need;
Scatter'd, they judged, and could unite no more,—
Not so,—they then were at the prison door.

For some had met who sought the haunts they loved,
And were to pity and to vengeance moved:
Their fellows perish! and they see their fall,—
Why not attempt the steep but guardless wall?

Attempt was made, his part assign'd each man,
And they succeeded in the desperate plan;
In truth, a purposed mercy smoothed their way,
But that they knew not—all triumphant they.
Safe in their well-known haunts, they all prepared
To plan anew, and show how much they dared.

With joy the troubled heart of Robert beat,
For life was his, and liberty was sweet;
He look'd around in freedom—in delight?
O no!—his Rachel was another's right!
"Right!—has he then preserved me in the day
"Of my distress?—He has the lovely pay!
"But I no freedom at the slaves request,
"The price I paid shall then be repossess'd!
"Alas! her virtue and the law prevent,
"Force cannot be, and she will not consent;
"But were that brother gone!—A brother? No!
"A circumventor!—and the wretch shall go!
"Yet not this hand—How shifts about my mind,
"Ungovern'd, guideless, drifting in the wind,
"And I am all a tempest, whirl'd around
"By dreadful thoughts, that fright me and confound;—
"I would I saw him on the earth laid low!
"I wish the fate, but must not give the blow!"

So thinks a man when thoughtful; he prefers
A life of peace till man his anger stirs,
Then all the efforts of his reason cease,
And he forgets how pleasant was that peace;

Till the wild passions what they seek obtain,
And then he sinks into his calm again.

Now met the lawless clan,—in secret met,
And down at their convivial board were set;
Their ancient stores were rifled,—strong desires
Awaked, and wine rekindled latent fires.
It was a night such bold desires to move,
Strong winds and wintry torrents fill'd the grove;
The crackling boughs that in the forest fell,
The cawing rooks, the cur's affrighten'd yell;
The scenes above the wood, the floods below,
Were mix'd, and none the single sound could know;
"Loud blow the blasts," they cried, "and call us as
they blow."
"'Tis a last night!" they said.—The angry blast
And roaring floods seem'd answering, "'Tis a last."

The keeper early had retired to rest
For brief repose;—sad thoughts his mind possess'd;
In his short sleep he started from his bed,
And ask'd in fancy's terror, "Is he dead?"
There was a call below, when James awoke,
Rose from his bed, and arms to aid him took,
Not all defensive!—there his helpers stood,
Arm'd like himself, and hastening to the wood.

"Why this?" he said, for Rachel pour'd her tears
Profuse, that spoke involuntary fears:
"Sleep, that so early thou for us may'st wake,
"And we our comforts in return may take;
"Sleep, and farewell!" he said, and took his way,
And the sad wife in neither could obey;

She slept not nor well fared, but restless dwelt
On her past life, and past afflictions felt:
The man she loved, the brother and the foe
Of him she married!—It had wrought her woe;
But still she loved him—wonder'd where he stray'd
In this loud night! and if he were afraid.

More than one hour she thought, and dropping then
In sudden sleep, cried loudly, "Spare him, men!
"And do no murder!"—then awaked she rose,
And thought no more of trying for repose.

'Twas past the dead of night, when every sound
That nature mingles might be heard around.
Softly she left her door, her garden gate,
And seem'd as then committed to her fate;
Oft as she glided on in that sad night,
She stopp'd to listen, and she look'd for light;
And now, of night and nervous terror bred,
Arose a strong and superstitious dread;
She heard strange noises, and the shapes she saw
Of fancied beings bound her soul in awe.

The moon was risen, and she sometimes shone
Through thick white clouds, that flew tumultuous on,
Passing beneath her with an eagle's speed,
That her soft light imprison'd and then freed;
The fitful glimmering through the hedgerow green
Gave a strange beauty to the changing scene;
And roaring winds and rushing waters lent
Their mingled voice that to the spirit went.

To these she listen'd; but new sounds were heard,
And sight more startling to her soul appear'd;
There were low lengthen'd tones with sobs between,
And near at hand, but nothing yet was seen;
She hurried on, and "Who is there?" she cried.
"A dying wretch!" was from the earth replied.

It was her lover—was the man she gave
The price she paid, himself from death to save;
With whom, expiring, she must kneel and pray,
While the soul flitted from the shivering clay
That press'd the dewy ground, and bled its life away!
This was the part that duty bade her take,
Instant and ere her feelings were awake;
But now they waked to anguish; there came then,
Hurrying with lights, loud-speaking, eager men.

"And here, my lord, we met — And who is here?
"The keeper's wife—Ah! woman, go not near!
"There lies the man that was the head of all —
"See, in his temples went the fatal ball!
"And James that instant, who was then our guide,
"Felt in his heart the adverse shot and died!
"It was a sudden meeting, and the light
"Of a dull moon made indistinct our fight;
"He foremost fell!—But see, the woman creeps
"Like a lost thing, that wanders as she sleeps.
"See, here her husband's body—but she knows
"That other dead! and that her action shows.

"Rachel! why look you at your mortal foe?—
"She does not hear us.—Whither will she go?"

Now, more attentive, on the dead they gazed,
And they were brothers: sorrowing and amazed,
On all a momentary silence came,
A common softness, and a moral shame.

"Seized you the poachers?" said my lord.—"They fled,
"And we pursued not,—one of them was dead,
"And one of us: they hurried through the wood,
"Two lives were gone, and we no more pursued.
"Two lives of men, of valiant brothers lost!
"Enough, my lord, do hares and pheasants cost!"

So many thought, and there is found a heart
To dwell upon the deaths on either part;
Since this their morals have been more correct,
The cruel spirit in the place is check'd;
His lordship holds not in such sacred care,
Nor takes such dreadful vengeance for a hare;
The smugglers fear, the poacher stands in awe
Of Heaven's own act, and reverence the law;
There was, there is, a terror in the place
That operates on man's offending race;
Such acts will stamp their moral on the soul,
And while the bad they threaten and control,
Will to the pious and the humble say,
Yours is the right, the safe, the certain way,
'Tis wisdom to be good, 'tis virtue to obey.

So Rachel thinks, the pure, the good, the meek,
Whose outward acts the inward purpose speak.

As men will children at their sports behold,
And smile to see them, though unmoved and cold,
Smile at the recollected games, and then
Depart and mix in the affairs of men:
So Rachel looks upon the world, and sees
It can no longer pain her, longer please,
But just detain the passing thought, or cause
A gentle smile of pity or applause;
And then the recollected soul repairs
Her slumbering hope, and heeds her own affairs.

THE BOY-LOVER OF THE FAIR WIDOW *

GEORGE had of late indulged unusual fears
And dangerous hopes: he wept unconscious tears;—
Whether for camp or college, well he knew
He must at present bid his friends adieu;
His father, mother, sisters, could he part
With these, and feel no sorrow at his heart?
But from that lovely lady could he go?
That fonder, fairer, dearer mother?—No!
For while his father spoke, he fix'd his eyes
On that dear face, and felt a warmth arise,
A trembling flush of joy, that he could ill disguise—
Then ask'd himself from whence this growing bliss,
This new-found joy, and all that waits on this?
Why sinks that voice so sweetly in mine ear?
What makes it now a livelier joy to hear?
Why gives that touch—still, still do I retain
The fierce delight that tingled through each vein—
Why at her presence with such quickness flows
The vital current?—Well a lover knows.

O! tell me not of years,—can she be old?
Those eyes, those lips, can man unmoved behold?
Has time that bosom chill'd? are cheeks so rosy cold?

* Taken from the tale of "The Lady Barbara."

No, she is young, or I her love t' engage
Will grow discreet, and that will seem like age;
But speak it not; Death's equalising arm
Levels not surer than Love's stronger charm,
That bids all inequalities be gone,
That laughs at rank, that mocks comparison.

There is not young or old, if Love decrees,*
He levels orders, he confounds degrees;
There is not fair, or dark, or short, or tall,
Or grave, or sprightly—Love reduces all;
He makes unite the pensive and the gay,
Gives something here, takes something there away;
From each abundant good a portion takes,
And for each want a compensation makes;
Then tell me not of years—Love, power divine,
Takes, as he wills, from hers, and gives to mine.

And she, in truth, was lovely — Time had strown
No snows on her, though he so long had flown;
The purest damask blossom'd in her cheek,
The eyes said all that eyes are wont to speak;
Her pleasing person she with care adorn'd,
Nor arts that stay the flying graces scorn'd;
Nor held it wrong these graces to renew,
Or give the fading rose its opening hue;
Yet few there were who needed less the art
To hide an error, or a grace impart.

* Edward Fitzgerald says that these ten lines "almost set themselves to music."

George, yet a child, her faultless form admired,
And call'd his fondness love, as truth required;
But now, when conscious of the secret flame,
His bosom's pain, he dared not give the name;
In her the mother's milder passion grew,
Tender she was, but she was placid too;
From him the mild and filial love was gone,
And a strong passion came in triumph on.

"Will she," he cried, "this impious love allow?
"And, once my mother, be my mistress now?
"The parent-spouse? how far the thought from her,
"And how can I the daring wish aver?
"When first I speak it, how will those dear eyes
"Gleam with awaken'd horror and surprise;
"Will she not, angry and indignant, fly
"From my imploring call, and bid me die?
"Will she not shudder at the thought, and say,
"My son! and lift her eyes to heaven, and pray?

"Alas! I fear—and yet my soul she won
"While she with fond endearments call'd me son!
"Then first I felt—yet knew that I was wrong—
"This hope, at once so guilty and so strong:
"She gave—I feel it now—a mother's kiss,
"And quickly fancy took a bolder bliss;
"But hid the burning blush, for fear that eye
"Should see the transport, and the bliss deny:
"O! when she knows the purpose I conceal,
"When my fond wishes to her bosom steal,
"How will that angel fear? How will the woman
feel?

"And yet, perhaps, this instant, while I speak,
"She knows the pain I feel, the cure I seek;
"Better than I she may my feelings know,
"And nurse the passion that she dares not show;
"She reads the look,—and sure my eyes have shown
"To her the power and triumph of her own,—
"And in maternal love she veils the flame
"That she will heal with joy, yet hear with shame.

"Come, let me then—no more a son—reveal
"The daring hope, and for her favour kneel;
"Let me in ardent speech my meanings dress,
"And, while I mourn the fault, my love confess;
"And, once confess'd, no more that hope resign,
"For she or misery henceforth must be mine.
"O! what confusion shall I see advance
"On that dear face, responsive to my glance!
"Sure she can love!"

THE OLD HALL*

In an autumnal evening, cool and still,
The sun just dropp'd beneath a distant hill,
The children gazing on the quiet scene,
Then rose in glory night's majestic queen;
And pleasant was the checker'd light and shade,
Her golden beams and maple shadows made;
An ancient tree that in the garden grew,
And that fair picture on the gravel threw.

Then all was silent, save the sounds that make
Silence more awful, while they faintly break;
The frighten'd bat's low shriek, the beetle's hum,
With nameless sounds we know not whence they come.

Such was the evening; and that ancient seat
The scene where then some neighbours chanced to meet;
Up to the door led broken steps of stone,
Whose dewy surface in the moonlight shone,
On vegetation, that with progress slow,
Where man forbears to fix his foot, will grow;
The window's depth and dust repell'd the ray
Of the moon's light and of the setting day;

* From "The Cathedral Walk."

FARHAM HALL, IN SUFFOLK

Pictures there were, and each display'd a face
And form that gave their sadness to the place;
The frame and canvas show'd that worms unseen,
Save in their works, for years had working been;
A fire of brushwood on the irons laid
All the dull room in fitful views display'd,
And with its own wild light in fearful forms array'd.

THE CATHEDRAL

IN the Cathedral's gloom I pass'd my time,
" Much in devotion, much in thought sublime ;
" There oft I paced the aisles, and watch'd the glow
" Of the sun setting on the stones below,
" And saw the failing light, that strove to pass
" Through the dim coating of the storied glass,
" Nor fell within, but till the day was gone
" The red faint fire upon the window shone.
" I took the key, and ofttimes chose to stay
" Till all was vanish'd of the tedious day.
" Till I perceived no light, nor heard a sound,
" That gave me notice of a world around.

AN AUTUMN DAY*

THERE was a day, ere yet the autumn closed,
When, ere her wintry wars, the earth reposed,
When from the yellow weed the feathery crown,
Light as the curling smoke, fell slowly down;
When the wing'd insect settled in our sight,
And waited wind to recommence her flight;
When the wide river was a silver sheet,
And on the ocean slept th' unanchor'd fleet;
When from our garden, as we look'd above,
There was no cloud, and nothing seem'd to move.

* Fitzgerald calls them "those wonderful October lines." They are taken from "The Maid's Story."

THE OLD BACHELOR*

NOW all is quiet, and the mind sustains
" Its proper comforts, its befitting pains;
" The heart reposes; it has had its share
" Of love, as much as it could fairly bear,
" And what is left in life, that now demands its care?

" For O! my friends, if this were all indeed,
" Could we believe that nothing would succeed;
" If all were but this daily dose of life,
" Without a care or comfort, child or wife;
" These walks for health with nothing more in view,
" This doing nothing, and with labour too;
" This frequent asking when 'tis time to dine,
" This daily dozing o'er the news and wine;
" This age's riddle, when each day appears
" So very long, so very short the years;
" If this were all—but let me not suppose—
" What then were life! whose virtues, trials, woes,
" Would sleep th' eternal sleep, and there the scene would close.

* Concluding lines of a long poem. They describe the Old Bachelor's state of mind after the last of his many failures in love.

"This cannot be—but why has Time a pace
"That seems unequal in our mortal race?
"Quick is that pace in early life, but slow,
"Tedious and heavy, as we older grow;
"But yet, though slow, the movements are alike,
"And with no force upon the memory strike,
"And therefore tedious as we find them all,
"They leave us nothing we in view recall;
"But days that we so dull and heavy knew
"Are now as moments passing in review,
"And hence arises ancient men's report,
"That days are tedious, and yet years are short."

THE GIFT HOUSE*

RICHARD must now his morning visits pay,
And bid farewell, for he must go away.

He sought the Rector first, not lately seen,
For he had absent from his parish been;
"Farewell!" the younger man with feeling cried,
"Farewell!" the cold but worthy priest replied;
"When do you leave us?"—"I have days but two:"
"'Tis a short time—but, well—adieu, adieu!"

"Now, here is one," said Richard, as he went
To the next friend in pensive discontent,
"With whom I sate in social, friendly ease,
"Whom I respected, whom I wish'd to please;
"Whose love profess'd, I question'd not was true,
"And now to hear his heartless 'Well, adieu!'

"But 'tis not well—and he a man of sense,
"Grave, but yet looking strong benevolence;
"Whose slight acerbity and roughness told
"To his advantage; yet the man is cold;
"Nor will he know, when rising in the morn,
"That such a being to the world was born."

* See Note C.

Of the fair Sisters then he took his leave,
Forget he could not, he must think and grieve,
Must the impression of their wrongs retain,
Their very patience adding to his pain.

Parting was painful; when adieu he cried,
"You will return?" the gentle girls replied;
"You must return! your Brother knows you now,
"But to exist without you knows not how;
"Has he not told us of the lively joy
"He takes—forgive us—in the Brother-boy?
"He is alone and pensive; you can give
"Pleasure to one by whom a number live
"In daily comfort—sure for this you met,
"That for his debtors you might pay a debt—
"The poor are call'd ungrateful, but you still
"Will have their thanks for this—indeed you will."

Richard but little said, for he of late
Held with himself contention and debate.

"My Brother loves me, his regard I know,
"But will not such affection weary grow?
"He kindly says, 'Defer the parting day,'
"But yet may wish me in his heart away;
"Why should I grieve if he should weary be?
"There have been visitors who wearied me;
"He yet may love, and we may part in peace,
"Nay, in affection—novelty must cease—
"Man is but man; the thing he most desires
"Pleases awhile—then pleases not—then tires;

"George to his former habits and his friends
"Will now return—and so my visit ends."

Thus Richard communed with his heart; but still
He found opposed his reason and his will,
Found that his thoughts were busy in this train,
And he was striving to be calm in vain.

Now to his home, the morning visits past,
Return'd the guest—that evening was his last.
He met his Brother, and they spoke of those
From whom his comforts in the village rose;
Spoke of the favourites, whom so good and kind
It was peculiar happiness to find:
Then for the sisters in their griefs they felt,
And, sad themselves, on saddening subjects dwelt.

But George was willing all this woe to spare,
And let to-morrow be to-morrow's care:
He of his purchase talk'd—a thing of course,
As men will boldly praise a new-bought horse.
Richard was not to all its beauty blind,
And promised still to seek, with hope to find:
"The price indeed——"
"Yes, that," said George, "is high;
"But if I bought not, one was sure to buy,
"Who might the social comforts we enjoy,
"And every comfort, lessen or destroy.

"We must not always reckon what we give,
"But think how precious 'tis in peace to live;

"Some neighbour Nimrod might in very pride
"Have stirr'd my anger, and have then defied;
"Or worse, have loved, and teased me to excess
"By his kind care to give me happiness;
"Or might his lady and her daughters bring,
"To raise my spirits, to converse, and sing:
"'Twas not the benefit alone I view'd,
"But thought what horrid things I might exclude.

"Some party man might here have sat him down,
"Some country champion, railing at the crown,
"Or some true courtier, both prepared to prove,
"Who loved not them, could not their country love:
"If we have value for our health and ease,
"Should we not buy off enemies like these?"

So pass'd the evening in a quiet way,
When, lo! the morning of the parting day.

Each to the table went with clouded look,
And George in silence gazed upon a book;
Something that chance had offer'd to his view,—
He knew not what, or cared not, if he knew.

Richard his hand upon a paper laid,—
His vacant eye upon the carpet stray'd;
His tongue was talking something of the day,
And his vex'd mind was wandering on his way.

They spake by fits,—but neither had concern
In the replies,—they nothing wish'd to learn,

Nor to relate; each sat as one who tries
To baffle sadnesses and sympathies:
Each of his Brother took a steady view,—
As actor he, and as observer too.

Richard, whose heart was ever free and frank,
Had now a trial, and before it sank:
He thought his Brother—parting now so near—
Appear'd not as his Brother should appear;
He could as much of tenderness remark
When parting for a ramble in the park.

"Hours yet remain," said George,—"why should we sit
"With minds for conversation all unfit;
"Suppose I take the purposed ride with you,
"And guide your jaded praise to objects new,
"That buyers see?"—
And Richard gave assent
Without resistance, and without intent:
He liked not nor declined,—and forth the Brothers went.
"Come, my dear Richard! let us cast away
"All evil thoughts,—let us forget the day,
"And fight like men with grief till we like boys are gay."

Thus George,—and even this in Richard's mind
Was judged an effort rather wise than kind;
This flow'd from something he observed of late,
And he could feel it, but he could not state:

He thought some change appear'd,—yet fail'd to
prove,
Even as he tried, abatement in the love;
But in his Brother's manner was restraint
That he could feel, and yet he could not paint.

That they should part in peace full well he knew,
But much he fear'd to part with coolness too:
George had been peevish when the subject rose,
And never fail'd the parting to oppose;
Name it, and straight his features cloudy grew
To stop the journey as the clouds will do;—
And thus they rode along in pensive mood,
Their thoughts pursuing, by their cares pursued.

"Richard," said George, "I see it is in vain
"By love or prayer my Brother to retain;
"And, truth to tell, it was a foolish thing
"A man like thee from thy repose to bring
"Ours to disturb.—Say, how am I to live
"Without the comforts thou are wont to give?
"How will the heavy hours my mind afflict,—
"No one t' agree, no one to contradict,
"None to awake, excite me, or prevent,
"To hear a tale, or hold an argument,
"To help my worship in a case of doubt,
"And bring me in my blunders fairly out.
"Who now by manners lively or serene
"Comes between me and sorrow like a screen,
"And giving, what I look'd not to have found,
"A care, an interest in the world around?"

Silent was Richard, striving to adjust
His thoughts for speech,—for speak, he thought, he must.

"Yes, my dear Brother! from my soul I grieve
"Thee and the proofs of thy regard to leave:
"Thou hast been all that I could wish,—my pride
"Exults to find that I am thus allied:
"Yet to express a feeling, how it came,
"The pain it gives, its nature and its name,
"I know not,—but of late, I will confess,
"Not that thy love is little, but is less.

"Hadst thou received me in thy present mood,
"Sure I had held thee to be kind and good;
"But thou wert all the warmest heart could state,
"Affection dream, or hope anticipate;
"I must have wearied thee, yet day by day,—
"'Stay!' said my Brother, and 'twas good to stay;
"But now, forgive me, thinking I perceive
"Change undefined, and as I think I grieve.

"Have I offended?—Proud although I be,
"I will be humble, and concede to thee:
"Have I intruded on thee when thy mind
"Was vex'd, and then to solitude inclined?
"Oh! there are times when all things will molest
"Minds so disposed, so heavy, so oppress'd;
"And thine, I know, is delicate and nice,
"Sickening at folly, and at war with vice:

"Then, at a time when thou wert vex'd with these,
"I have intruded, let affection tease,
"And so offended."——
"Richard, if thou hast,
"'Tis at this instant, nothing in the past:
"No! thou art all a Brother's love would choose;
"And, having lost thee, I shall interest lose
"In all that I possess: I pray thee tell
"Wherein thy host has fail'd to please thee well,—
"Do I neglect thy comforts?"—
"Oh! not thou,
"But art thyself uncomfortable now,
"And 'tis from thee and from thy looks I gain
"This painful knowledge—'tis my Brother's pain;
"And yet, that something in my spirit lives,
"Something that spleen excites and sorrow gives,
"I may confess,—for not in thee I trace
"Alone this change, it is in all the place:
"Smile if thou wilt in scorn, for I am glad
"A smile at any rate is to be had.

"But there is Jacques,* who ever seem'd to treat
"Thy Brother kindly as we chanced to meet;
"Nor with thee only pleased our worthy guide,
"But in the hedgerow path and green-wood side,
"There he would speak with that familiar ease
"That makes a trifle, makes a nothing please.

"But now to my farewell,—and that I spoke
"With honest sorrow,—with a careless look,

* The Rector.

"Gazing unalter'd on some stupid prose—
"His sermon for the Sunday I suppose,—
"'Going?' said he: 'why then the Squire and you
"'Will part at last—You're going?—Well, adieu!'
"Careless he put his sermons in their place,
"With no more feeling than his sermon-case.
"Are such the friendships we contract in life?
"O, give me then the friendship of a wife!"

George stopp'd his horse, and with the kindest look
Spoke to his Brother,—earnestly he spoke,
As one who to his friend his heart reveals,
And all the hazard with the comfort feels.

"Soon as I loved thee, Richard,—and I loved
"Before my reason had the will approved,
"So soon I felt, that thus a friend to gain,
"And then to lose, is but to purchase pain:
"Daily the pleasure grew, then sad the day
"That takes it all in its increase away!

"Patient thou wert, and kind,—but well I knew
"The husband's wishes, and the father's too;
"Once and again, I urged thee to delay
"Thy purposed journey, still deferr'd the day,
"And still on its approach the pain increased,
"Till my request and thy compliance ceased;
"I could not further thy affection task,
"Nor more of one so self-resisting ask;
"But yet to lose thee, Richard, and with thee
"All hope of social joys—it cannot be.

"No! I would have thee, Brother, all my own,
"To grow beside me as my trees have grown;
"For ever near me, pleasant in my sight,
"And in my mind, my pride and my delight.

"Yet will I tell thee, Richard; had I found
"Thy mind dependent and thy heart unsound,
"Hadst thou been poor, obsequious, and disposed
"With any wish or measure to have closed,
"Willing on me and gladly to attend,
"The younger brother, the convenient friend;
"Thy speculation its reward had made
"Like other ventures—thou hadst gain'd in trade;
"What reason urged, or Jacques esteem'd thy due,
"Thine had it been, and I, a trader too,
"Had paid my debt, and home my Brother sent,
"Nor glad nor sorry that he came or went;
"Who to his wife and children would have told,
"They had an uncle, and the man was old;
"Till every girl and boy had learn'd to prate
"Of Uncle George, his gout, and his estate.
"Thus had we parted; but as now thou art,
"I must not lose thee—No! I cannot part;
"Is it in human nature to consent
"To give up all the good that Heaven has lent,
"All social ease and comfort to forego,
"And live again the solitary? No!

"We part no more, dear Richard! thou wilt need
"Thy Brother's help to teach thy boys to read;
"And I should love to hear Matilda's psalm,
"To keep my spirit in a morning calm,

"And feel the soft devotion that prepares
"The soul to rise above its earthly cares;
"Then thou and I, an independent two,
"May have our parties, and defend them too;
"Thy liberal notions, and my loyal fears,
"Will give us subjects for our future years;
"We will for truth alone contend and read,
"And our good Jacques shall oversee our creed.

. . . . . .

"Dwell in that house, and we shall still be near,
"Absence and parting I no more shall fear;
"Dwell in thy home, and at thy will exclude
"All who shall dare upon thee to intrude."

Thus George had spoken, and then look'd around,
And smiled as one who then his road had found;
"Follow!" he cried, and briskly urged his horse:
Richard was puzzled, but obey'd of course;
He was affected like a man astray,
Lost, but yet knowing something of the way;
Till a wood clear'd, that still conceal'd the view,
Richard the purchase of his Brother knew;
And something flash'd upon his mind not clear,
But much with pleasure mix'd, in part with fear;
As one who wandering through a stormy night
Sees his own home, and gladdens at the sight,
Yet feels some doubt if fortune had decreed
That lively pleasure in such time of need;
So Richard felt—but now the mansion came
In view direct,—he knew it for the same;

There too the garden walk, the elms design'd
To guard the peaches from the eastern wind;
And there the sloping glass, that when he shines
Gives the sun's vigour to the ripening vines.—

"It is my Brother's!"—
"No!" he answers, "No!
"'Tis to thy own possession that we go;
"It is thy wife's, and will thy children's be,
"Earth, wood, and water!—all for thine and thee;
"Here, on this lawn, thy boys and girls shall run,
"And play their gambols when their tasks are done;
"There, from that window, shall their mother view
"The happy tribe, and smile at all they do;
"While thou, more gravely, hiding thy delight,
"Shalt cry, 'O! childish!' and enjoy the sight." *

* Favourite lines with Edward Fitzgerald.

A TORY MERCHANT*

JAMES was a Churchman — 'twas his pride and boast;
Loyal his heart, and "Church and King" his toast;
He for Religion might not warmly feel,
But for the Church he had abounding zeal.

Yet no dissenting sect would he condemn,
"They're nought to us," said he, "nor we to them;
"'Tis innovation of our own I hate,
"Whims and inventions of a modern date.

"Why send you Bibles all the world about,
"That men may read amiss, and learn to doubt?
"Why teach the children of the poor to read,
"That a new race of doubters may succeed?
"Now can you scarcely rule the stubborn crew,
"And what if they should know as much as you?
"Will a man labour when to learning bred,
"Or use his hands who can employ his head?
"Will he a clerk or master's self obey,
"Who thinks himself as well inform'd as they?"

* This and the next two pieces are taken from the posthumous volume.

These were his favourite subjects—these he chose,
And where he ruled no creature durst oppose.

"We are rich," quoth James; "but if we thus
proceed,
"And give to all, we shall be poor indeed:
"In war we subsidise the world—in peace
"We Christianise—our bounties never cease:
"We learn each stranger's tongue, that they with
ease
"May read translated Scriptures, if they please;
"We buy them presses, print them books, and then
"Pay and export poor learned, pious men;
"Vainly we strive a fortune now to get,
"So tax'd by private claims, and public debt."

Still he proceeds—"You make your prisons light,
"Airy and clean, your robbers to invite:
"And in such ways your pity show to vice,
"That you the rogues encourage, and entice."

For lenient measures James had no regard—
"Hardship," he said, "must work upon the hard;
"Labour and chains such desperate men require;
"To soften iron you must use the fire."

Active himself, he labour'd to express,
In his strong words, his scorn of idleness;
From him in vain the beggar sought relief—
"Who will not labour is an idle thief,

"Stealing from those who will;" he knew not how
For the untaught and ill-taught to allow,
Children of want and vice, inured to ill,
Unchain'd the passions, and uncurb'd the will.

Alas! he look'd but to his own affairs,
Or to the rivals in his trade, and theirs:
Knew not the thousands who must all be fed,
Yet ne'er were taught to earn their daily bread;
Whom crimes, misfortunes, errors only teach
To seek their food where'er within their reach,
Who for their parents' sins, or for their own,
Are now as vagrants, wanderers, beggars known,
Hunted and hunting through the world, to share
Alms and contempt, and shame and scorn to bear;
Whom Law condemns, and Justice, with a sigh,
Pursuing, shakes her sword and passes by.*—

But James had virtues—was esteem'd as one
Whom men look'd up to, and relied upon.
Kind to his equals, social when they met—
If out of spirits, always out of debt;
True to his promise, he a lie disdain'd,
And e'en when tempted in his trade, refrain'd;
Frugal he was, and loved the cash to spare,
Gain'd by much skill, and nursed by constant care;

* Fitzgerald asks, "Has English poetry many a finer couplet than this?"

Yet liked the social board, and when he spoke,
Some hail'd his wisdom, some enjoy'd his joke.
To him a Brother look'd as one to whom,
If fortune frown'd, he might in trouble come;
His Sisters view'd the important man with awe,
As if a parent in his place they saw.

THE ANCIENT MANSION

I

To part is painful; nay, to bid adieu
Ev'n to a favourite spot is painful too.
That fine old Seat, with all those oaks around,
Oft have I view'd with reverence so profound,
As something sacred dwelt in that delicious ground.

There, with its tenantry about, reside
A genuine English race, the country's pride;
And now a Lady, last of all that race,
Is the departing spirit of the place.
Hers is the last of all that noble blood,
That flow'd through generations brave and good;
And if there dwells a native pride in her,
It is the pride of name and character.

True, she will speak, in her abundant zeal,
Of stainless honour; that she needs must feel;
She must lament that she is now the last
Of all who gave such splendour to the past.

Still are her habits of the ancient kind;
She knows the poor, the sick, the lame, the blind:
She holds, so she believes, her wealth in trust;
And being kind, with her, is being just.

Though soul and body she delights to aid,
Yet of her skill she's prudently afraid:
So to her chaplain's care she *this* commends,
And when *that* craves, the village doctor sends.

Her servants all, if so we may describe
That ancient, grave, observant, decent tribe,
Who with her share the blessings of the Hall,
Are kind but grave, are proud but courteous all—
Proud of their lucky lot! behold, how stands
That grey-haired butler, waiting her commands;
The Lady dines, and every day he feels
That his good mistress falters in her meals.
With what respectful manners he entreats
That she would eat—yet Jacob little eats;
When she forbears, his supplicating eye
Entreats the noble dame once more to try.
Their years the same; and he has never known
Another place; and this he deems his own,—
All appertains to him. Whate'er he sees
Is *ours!*—"our house, our land, our walks, our trees!"

But still he fears the time is just at hand,
When he no more shall in that presence stand;
And he resolves, with mingled grief and pride,
To serve no being in the world beside.
"He has enough," he says, with many a sigh,
"For him to serve his God, and learn to die:
"He and his lady shall have heard their call,
"And the new folk, the strangers, may have all."

But, leaving these to their accustom'd way,
The Seat itself demands a short delay.
We all have interest there—the trees that grow
Near to that seat, to that their grandeur owe;
They take, but largely pay, and equal grace bestow.
They hide a part, but still the part they shade
Is more inviting to our fancy made;
And, if the eye be robb'd of half its sight,
Th' imagination feels the more delight.
These giant oaks by no man's order stand,
Heaven did the work; by no man was it plann'd.

Here I behold no puny works of art,
None give me reasons why these views impart
Such charm to fill the mind, such joy to swell the heart.
These very pinnacles, and turrets small,
And windows dim, have beauty in them all.
How stately stand yon pines upon the hill,
How soft the murmurs of that living rill!
And o'er the park's tall paling, scarcely higher,
Peeps the low Church and shows the modest spire.
Unnumber'd violets on those banks appear,
And all the first-born beauties of the year;
The grey-green blossoms of the willows bring
The large wild bees upon the labouring wing;
Then comes the Summer with augmented pride,
Whose pure small streams along the valleys glide;
Then shall th' autumnal yellow clothe the leaf,
What time the reaper binds the burden'd sheaf;
Then silent groves denote the dying year,
The morning frost, and noontide gossamer,

And all be silent in the scene around,
All save the distant sea's uncertain sound;
And then the wintry winds begin to blow,
Then fall the flaky stars of gathering snow.
The aged moss grows brittle on the pale,
The dry boughs splinter in the windy gale;
So every changing season of the year
Stamps on the scene its English character.

Farewell! a prouder Mansion I may see,
But much must meet in that which equals thee!

II

I leave the town, and take a well-known way,
To that old Mansion in the closing day,
When beams of golden light are shed around,
And sweet is every sight and every sound.
Pass but this hill, and I shall then behold
The Seat so honour'd, so admired of old,
And yet admired——

Alas! I see a change,
Of odious kind, and lamentably strange.
Who had done this? Some genuine Son of Trade
Has all this dreadful devastation made;
Some man with line and rule, and evil eye,
Who could no beauty in a tree descry,
Save in a clump, when stationed by his hand,
And standing where his genius bade him stand;
Some true admirer of the time's reform,
Who strips an ancient dwelling like a storm.

Strips it of all its dignity and grace,
To put his own dear fancies in their place.
He hates concealment: all that was enclosed
By venerable wood, is now exposed,
And a few stripling elms and oaks appear,
Fenced round by boards, to keep them from the deer.

I miss the grandeur of the rich old scene,
And see not what these clumps and patches mean!
This shrubby belt that runs the land around
Shuts freedom out! what being likes a bound?
The shrubs indeed, and ill-placed flowers, are gay,
And some would praise; I wish they were away,
That in the wild-wood maze I as of old might stray.
The things themselves are pleasant to behold,
But not like those which we beheld of old,—
That half-hid mansion, with its wide domain,
Unbound and unsubdued!—but sighs are vain;
It is the rage of Taste—the rule and compass reign.

As thus my spleen upon the view I fed,
A man approach'd me, by his grandchild led—
A blind old man, and she a fair young maid,
Listening in love to what her grandsire said.

And thus with gentle voice he spoke—
"Come lead me, lassie, to the shade,
"Where willows grow beside the brook;
"For well I know the sound it made,
"When dashing o'er the stony rill,
"It murmur'd to St. Osyth's Mill."

The Lass replied—"The trees are fled,
"They've cut the brook a straighter bed:
"No shades the present lords allow,
"The miller only murmurs now;
"The waters now his mill forsake,
"And form a pond they call a lake."

"Then, lassie, lead thy grandsire on,
"And to the holy water bring;
"A cup is fastened to the stone,
"And I would taste the healing spring,
"That soon its rocky cist forsakes,
"And green its mossy passage makes."

"The holy spring is turn'd aside,
"The rock is gone, the stream is dried;
"The plough has levell'd all around,
"And here is now no holy ground."

"Then, lass, thy grandsire's footsteps guide,
"To Bulmer's Tree, the giant oak,
"Whose boughs the keeper's cottage hide,
"And part the church-way lane o'erlook;
"A boy, I climb'd the topmost bough,
"And I would feel its shadow now.

"Or, lassie, lead me to the west,
"Where grew the elm-trees thick and tall,
"Where rooks unnumber'd build their nest—
"Deliberate birds, and prudent all:
"Their notes, indeed, are harsh and rude,
"But they're a social multitude."

"The rooks are shot, the trees are fell'd,
"And nest and nursery all expell'd;
"With better fate the giant tree,
"Old Bulmer's Oak, is gone to sea.
"The church-way walk is now no more,
"And men must other ways explore."

"O then, my lassie, lead the way
"To Comfort's Home, the ancient inn:
"That something holds, if we can pay—
"Old David is our living kin;
"A servant once, he still preserves
"His name, and in his office serves."

"Alas! that mine should be the fate
"Old David's sorrows to relate:
"But they were brief; not long before
"He died, his office was no more.
"The kennel stands upon the ground,
"With something of the former sound."

"O then," the grieving Man replied,
"No farther, lassie, let me stray;
"Here's nothing left of ancient pride,
"Of what was grand, of what was gay:
"But all is changed, is lost, is sold—
"All, all that's left is chilling cold.
"I seek for comfort here in vain,
"Then lead me to my cot again."

ALDBOROUGH.

RACHEL

IT chanced we walk'd upon the heath, and met
A wandering woman; her thin clothing wet
With morning fog; the little care she took
Of things like these, was written in her look.
Not pain from pinching cold was in her face,
But hurrying grief, that knows no resting-place,—
Appearing ever as on business sent,
The wandering victim of a fix'd intent;
Yet in her fancied consequence and speed,
Impell'd to beg assistance for her need.

When she beheld my friend and me, with eye
And pleading hand, she sought our charity.

"Where art thou wandering, Rachel? whither stray,
"From thy poor heath in such unwholesome day?"
Ask'd my kind friend, who had familiar grown
With Rachel's grief, and oft compassion shown;
Oft to her hovel had in winter sent
The means of comfort—oft with comforts went.
Him well she knew, and with requests pursued,
Though too much lost and spent for gratitude.

"Where art thon wandering, Rachel, let me
hear?"—
"The fleet! the fleet!" she answer'd, "will appear
"Within the bay, and I shall surely know
"The news to-night!—turn tide, and breezes blow!
"For if I lose my time, I must remain
"Till the next year before they come again!"

"What can they tell thee, Rachel?"—
"Should I say,
"I must repent me to my dying day.
"Then I should lose the pension that they give;
"For who would trust their secrets to a sieve?
"I must be gone!"—And with her wild, but keen
And crafty look, that would appear to mean,
She hurried on; but turn'd again to say,
"All will be known: they anchor in the bay;
"Adieu! be secret!—sailors have no home:
"Blow wind, turn tide!—Be sure the fleet will come."

Grown wilder still, the frantic creature strode
With hurried feet upon the flinty road.
On her departing form I gazed with pain—
"And should you not," I cried, "her ways restrain?
"What hopes the wild deluded wretch to meet?
"And means she aught by this expected fleet?
"Knows she her purpose? has she hope to see
"Some friend to aid her in her poverty?
"Why leave her thus bewilder'd to pursue
"The fancy's good, that never comes in view?"—

"Nay! she is harmless, and if more confined,
"Would more distress in the coercion find.

"Save at the times when to the coast she flies,
"She rests, nor shows her mind's obliquities,
"But ever talks she of the sea, and shows
"Her sympathy with every wind that blows.
"We think it, therefore, useless to restrain
"A creature of whose conduct none complain,
"Whose age and looks protect her,—should they fail,
"Her craft and wild demeanour will prevail.
"A soldier once attack'd her on her way—
"She spared him not, but bade him kneel and pray—
"Praying herself aloud—th' astonish'd man
"Was so confounded, that away he ran.

"Her sailor left her, with. perhaps, intent
"To make her his—'tis doubtful what he meant:
"But he was captured, and the life he led
"Drove all such young engagements from his head.
"On him she ever thought, and none beside,
"Seeking her love, were favour'd or denied;
"On her dear David she had fix'd her view,
"And fancy judged him ever fond and true.
"Nay, young and handsome — Time could not destroy—
"No—he was still the same—her gallant boy!

"With want and labour was her mind subdued;
"She lived in sorrow and in solitude.
"Religious neighbours, kindly calling, found
"Her thoughts unsettled, anxious, and unsound.
"They hoped to give her notions of their own,
"And talk'd of 'feelings' she had never known;

"They ask'd of her 'experience,' and they bred
"In her weak mind a melancholy dread
"Of something wanting in her faith, of some—
"She knew not what—'acceptance,' that should come;
"And, as it came not, she was much afraid
"That she in vain had served her God and pray'd.

"She thought her Lover dead. In prayer she named
The erring Youth, and hoped he was reclaim'd.
"This she confess'd; and trembling, heard them say,
"'Her prayers were sinful—So the papists pray.
"'Her David's fate had been decided long,
"'And prayers and wishes for his state were wrong.'

"Had these her guides united love and skill,
"They might have ruled and rectified her will;
"But they perceived not the bewilder'd mind,
"And show'd her paths that she could never find:
"The weakness that was Nature's they reproved,
"And all its comforts from the Heart removed.

"Ev'n in this state, she loved the winds that sweep
"O'er the wild heath, and curl the restless deep;
"A turf-built hut beneath a hill she chose,
"And oft at night in winter storms arose,
"Hearing, or dreaming, the distracted cry
"Of drowning seamen on the breakers by:
"For there were rocks, that when the tides were low
"Appear'd, and vanish'd when the waters flow;

"And there she stood, all patient to behold
"Some seaman's body on the billows roll'd.

"One calm, cold evening, when the moon was high,
"And rode sublime within the cloudless sky,
"She sat within her hut, nor seem'd to feel
"Or cold or want, but turn'd her idle wheel,
"And with sad song its melancholy tone
"Mix'd, all unconscious that she dwelt alone.

"But none will harm her—Or who, willing, can?
"She is too wretched to have fear of man—
"Not man! but something—if it should appear,
"That once was man—that something did she fear.

"No causeless terror!—In that moon's clear light
"It came, and seem'd a parley to invite;
"It was no hollow voice—no brushing by
"Of a strange being, who escapes the eye—
"No cold or thrilling touch, that will but last
"While we can think, and then for ever past.
"But this sad face—though not the same, she knew
"Enough the same, to prove the vision true—
"Look'd full upon her!—starting in affright
"She fled, her wildness doubling at the sight;
"With shrieks of terror, and emotion strong,
"She pass'd it by, and madly rush'd along
"To the bare rocks—While David, who, that day,
"Had left his ship at anchor in the bay,
"Had seen his friends who yet survived, and heard
"Of her who loved him—and who thus appear'd—

"He tried to soothe her, but retired afraid
"T' approach, and left her to return for aid.

"None came! and Rachel in the morn was found
"Turning her wheel, without its spindles, round,
"With household look of care, low singing to the sound.

"Since that event, she is what you have seen,
"But time and habit make her more serene,
"The edge of anguish blunted—yet, it seems,
"Sea, ships, and sailors' miseries are her dreams."

NOTES

Note A., pp. 5 and 48.—The Poorhouse.

The poorhouse described on pages 5 and 6 is the old parochial workhouse established under the Act of 1601 in every parish. These wretched abodes of misery continued, alas! long after the date of this poem. Here is a description of these houses in the smaller parishes—and they were not much better in the large towns—given by the Poor-Law Commissioners of 1832–34. It is Crabbe's little "Inferno" in prose:—

"In such parishes, when overburdened with poor, we usually find the building called a workhouse occupied by sixty or eighty paupers, made up of a dozen or more neglected children (under the care, perhaps, of a pauper), about twenty or thirty able-bodied adult paupers of both sexes, and probably an equal number of aged and impotent persons. Amidst these the mothers of bastard children and prostitutes live without shame, and associate freely with the youth, who have also the examples and conversation of the frequent inmates of the county jail, the poacher, the vagrant, the decayed beggar, and other characters of the worst description. To these may often be added a solitary blind person, one or two idiots, and not unfrequently are heard, from among the rest, the incessant ravings of some neglected lunatic. In such receptacles the sick poor are often immured."

Such was too often the parish workhouse. Gilbert's Act of 1782, however, permitted the union of several parishes for the purpose of poor-relief in common, and for the erection of a common poor-house. It was early adopted in Suffolk, and here and there elsewhere, and by the year 1834 there were sixty-seven such incorporations. Under the Act of 1834 and subsequent administration by the Poor-Law Board, this system became universal in England. This was the new "Plan," which Crabbe assails on page 48. He advocated neither the Parish nor the Union Work-

house, but adequate relief to the aged and deserving poor at their own old cottages, so that his ideas were rather those of the present day than those either of his own or of the succeeding Reform generation.

Note B., p. 98.—The Parting Hour.

Mr. Crabbe's fourth brother, William, taking to a seafaring life, was made prisoner by the Spaniards: he was carried to Mexico, where he became a silversmith, married, and prospered, until his increasing riches attracted a charge of Protestantism; the consequence of which was much persecution. He at last was obliged to abandon Mexico, his property, and his family; and was discovered, in the year 1803, by an Aldborough sailor, on the coast of Honduras, where again he seems to have found some success in business. This sailor was the only person he had seen for many a year who could tell him anything of Aldborough and his family; and great was his perplexity when he was informed that his eldest brother, George, was a clergyman. "This cannot be *our* George," said the wanderer—"he was a *doctor!*" This was the first, and it was also the last, tidings that ever reached Mr. Crabbe of his brother William; and upon the Aldborough sailor's story of his casual interview it is obvious that he built this tale.—(Note to edition of 1834.)

Note C., p. 193.—The Meeting of the Brothers.

The selections from page 193 down to page 369 are taken from the "Tales of the Hall," which fill two volumes of the complete edition of 1834. After the model of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" and Boccaccio's "Decameron," Crabbe adopted a general framework for these Tales consisting of a Preface and Conclusion to the whole, and a connecting prologue to each story. No form of selection can therefore do justice to the whole. The idea of the Tales is as follows:—

Two brothers, the elder named George, and the younger—much the younger—named Richard, have the same mother but different fathers. George has spent his life in business in London, has accumulated a decent fortune, has—for reasons indicated in the poems—never married, and has at last purchased Binning Hall, the great place of the village of his boyhood, and retired there to

spend the evening of life. Having effected this he begins to feel somewhat lonely and dull, in spite of a few agreeable neighbours, and needs objects for his affections.

Richard, the younger brother, after a boyhood spent with his mother in a seaport town, went to sea. Subsequently he made a successful love marriage, and, having had a family of children, finds himself poor. The brothers have rarely met in life, but now Richard, without his wife, comes for a long visit to the Squire of Binning. He has some doubts as to what his reception will be, but these are speedily dissipated. The brothers spend several weeks together, and wile away the time by telling stories of their own lives. George also narrates to Richard adventures in the lives of some of the neighbours. Meanwhile the elder brother resolves to purchase as a gift to the younger a pleasing house not far away. This he effects all unknown to his brother, and, with the aid of the friendly rector, even transports thither Richard's wife and children. When all is ready he introduces Richard to his new home in the course of a ride, and, with charming courtesy, makes it impossible for him to refuse the gift. Thus Richard obtains a settled home, and George obtains family society within easy distance. The poem as a whole is delightful, and I hope that this abbreviated version will induce more persons to read it in its integrity.

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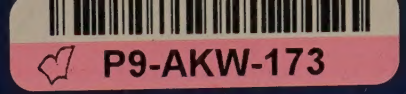
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